

# MIDWAY

*Magazine of Discovery in the Arts and Sciences*



**The Dig at Novgorod**

VALENTIN L. YAMNE

**The Duchess at Sunset**

PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON

**The Genius of American Politics**

DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

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*A report on one of Russia's  
most important archeological sites,  
where high soil humidity  
has preserved the antiquities  
of several centuries.*



By VALENTIN L. YANINE

## The Dig at

**T**HE study of the Russian Middle Age, utilizing archeology as a key, has scored great successes at Novgorod during these last years. The thick historical layer formed there over a period of a thousand years is at present being sifted by an important group of Soviet archeologists.

This focusing of attention on ancient Novgorod is explained principally by the outstanding role the city played in Russian history. Here were concentrated in earlier days the industrial, commercial, cultural, and military life of the vast regions of northwestern Russia. Novgorod was a center of the greatest



importance, where, for centuries during its development, the principal historic laws governing the formation of Russian feudalism revealed themselves with the maximum of clarity.

The particular aspects of the social regime of Novgorod during its evolution led to the emergence of a state where characteristic signs of a republican order were in constant progress, to the detriment of the monarchical power of the prince, the former finally predominating over the latter in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Novgorod is a veritable treasure house of documentation which can be verified by cross-checking. There the writing of annals was traditional, and many local chronicles have come down to us, setting forth in consistent fashion the events of the

# Novgorod



*Upper left: head of an owl  
in bone, 12th century;  
right, wooden model  
of a church, 12th century.*

eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. By virtue of the strict system followed, writings concerning affairs of state as well as private documents having an official character were carefully preserved, including a certain number of official documents which have also been preserved. The fact that Novgorod was not subjected to the Mongol invasion permitted its old artistic monuments to survive. Finally, the fact that, in the sixteenth century, Novgorod lost some of its importance and became a small provincial town preserved in the best possible way its architectural unity, its monuments, and its soil, despite the extensive construction carried on from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries.

With its unprecedented collection of historical monuments, Novgorod offers enormous advantages to the archeologist. Certain factors, notably the high humidity of the soil, have influenced the formation of its historical layer. A constant humidity helps considerably to preserve ancient objects. Metal objects found in the soil are covered with a thin layer of corrosion which can easily be removed or regenerated, while organic materials totally penetrated by humidity keep their form entirely. This is the reason the many wooden remains of roadbeds, buildings, palisades, household utensils, etc., as well as grains, leather, and birch-bark articles, shreds of cloth, and chips of wood, are completely intact in the soil. In many Russian towns where organic refuse has decomposed, the depth of the historical layer is likely to be no more than one or two meters, while in Novgorod the stratification of the historical layer often reaches a thickness of six to eight meters. Since the city has existed for a thousand years, we may say that the top layer has risen on an average of about one meter a century.

The high soil humidity has had another important consequence. Before the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the inhabitants generally refrained from digging cellars for storing

and preserving food beneath their houses, built principally of wood, as these were constantly threatened with flooding. Consequently, the top layer was not subjected to any important disturbances, and its exceptional thickness protected it against the excavating done in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which generally affected only the most recent levels of the historical layer. Moreover, in the Middle Age, Novgorod did not know the use of excavated foundations for wooden buildings, a process which always damages the historical layer in towns built on dry soil.

Thanks to these circumstances, Novgorod's historical layer, in contrast with that of many other Russian cities, is easily divisible into relatively thick levels of twenty to twenty-five years each. These levels are rich in ancient objects, whose dating is thus facilitated. The great number of finds which have been made here allows the use of statistics and affords constantly repeated verifications of the date obtained by stratigraphic observations. The Novgorod excavations permit the establishing of a precise chronological scale of the different categories of ancient objects; thus, these objects serve to date finds which until recently demanded far more complex procedures.

The work has a decisive importance for researches still to be undertaken in Novgorod, for this is the first time that archeological chronology has acquired a precision equal to that of written sources. The work is important also for the study of other cities of the Middle Age. Articles found in Novgorod may be local products, or they may come from Kiev, Smolensk, or Moscow, to say nothing of the Orient, Byzantium, and the West. Whereas at the site of their production many of these articles are dated within a period of one or two centuries, those taken from the Novgorod historical layer can be dated with greater precision.

The good preservation of wooden architectural remains

allows us to reconstruct the plans of ancient dwellings with their outbuildings, including the slightest modifications made in them over the centuries; moreover, these remains allow us to state precisely, in correlation with the established buildings, the purpose of the series of objects found there and, using these as keys, to learn the character and the ownership of the dwellings.

The Novgorod diggings have been considerably facilitated by the fact that the present plan of the city goes back only to the eighteenth century and that its street pattern does not coincide with the ancient one. Vestiges of former streets and their buildings have remained separated from the new arteries of the community underground pattern, which can be extremely complicating in archeological work.

#### DIGGING UP A MEDIEVAL SUBURB

The systematic excavations at Novgorod began in 1929. They were undertaken on the initiative of Professor A. Artsikhovsky, who later became the permanent head of the expedition. Before the war, excavations were conducted on a small scale in different quarters of the city, with the essential purpose of determining beforehand the particular aspects of the historical layer to be explored and the vestiges that it might yield.

During work carried out in 1947-48, on the site of the residence of Prince Yaroslav (eleventh century), and later on the site of the Novgorodian people's assemblies, excavations in one sector extended over 836 square meters. These allowed us for the first time to study in detail an important fraction of the former city and provided information from which could be drawn some very interesting conclusions. Nevertheless, their importance is relatively small in comparison with the large excavations undertaken in 1951 in another quarter of Novgorod, the suburb of Nérévo.

The noteworthy discoveries of 1951 clearly demanded a concentration of all efforts upon a single sector. Since then, the work has been resumed each year. The radius of the diggings extends to an ordinary quarter of town, which in the Middle Age was built over with dwelling houses. In eight years the excavations have involved a sector whose total area is more than 7,300 square meters. The exposed quarter is outlined precisely on the old medieval map of Novgorod, particularly because the arrangement of this part of the city goes back to the tenth century and remained unchanged up to the eighteenth century.

The plan of this sector is perfectly verified. Novgorod's streets have always been paved with large circular blocks, of a diameter up to a meter, set on cross-beams. So well preserved are these street foundations that they can still carry heavy loads. The lower circular blocks of the old wooden buildings and the buried part of the palisades are also well preserved.

The vertical section of the digging area is characterized by the same precision. The foundation of Novgorod's streets was renewed as the earth layer built up around it and was kept clean. Nevertheless, that layer, rising around the foundation, finally became higher than the street level. A new foundation of circular blocks was then installed, right on top of the old one, which could still give many years of service. Thus, the street beds of the fifteenth century had a number of older ones as their foundations. During excavations in the suburb of Nérévo, twenty-eight of these street beds were uncovered, the oldest dating from the tenth century, the most recent from the sixteenth.

These street foundations allow us to divide the historical layer chronologically, and the study of the successive layers of wood shavings, ashes, etc., allows us to establish a correlation between the foundation and a determined level, with all the

objects and remains of buildings found in it. Each level thus constitutes an archeological whole, which is the principal objective of the researches conducted at Novgorod. On the maps the excavation area can be shown as many times as there were roadbeds, that is to say, once in the space of a minimum of twenty-five years, and, in going over the maps, we see in succession the way in which the arrangement of the city has evolved from its beginnings.

The following figures give some idea of the extent of the diggings. The average thickness of the historical layer in the suburb of Nérévo is from seven to seven and a half meters. Toward the end of 1955, the remains of more than 5,500 buildings of different periods had been brought to light.

In the twelfth century and in the first half of the thirteenth, Novgorod received many objects originating in Kiev, notably certain articles of glass, wines contained in pottery vessels from the south, and objects made of Volhynie slate. Production of these articles stopped completely toward the middle of the thirteenth century, when the workshops at Kiev and in the other southern Russian cities were destroyed by the Mongols and the artisans were killed off or were taken away to Tartar cities. In Novgorod, half of the thirteenth century is marked by a reduction, which can be followed, in the quantity of objects of southern origin. Other dates are determined by means of coinage and of lead seals used by known historical persons (in eight years more than sixty seals were found), by means of articles bearing heraldic and other markings, found in different levels.

To cite a few examples: In Novgorod the production of ornaments in Baltic amber was highly developed, a fact confirmed by numerous finds of the remains of this production. Now the statistics of the finds show a remarkable decrease of these vestiges in the thirteenth century, which, indeed, was the

period of the most intensive military clashes on the western borders of the territory and, naturally enough, had repercussions on the general state of Novgorod's trade with the West. Another example is the dating of the twenty-seventh level. Stratigraphically, it had been set provisionally in the seventh decade of the tenth century. In the following years, two treasures of coins from Central Asia were found, each one containing about nine hundred coins coming for the most part from Samarkand. One treasure, according to the least ancient coin, was dated as of 972, the other as of 975, thus confirming that the whole level had been correctly dated. Still another example: An analysis was made by Artsikhovsky of the twenty-three spurs which were found and which reproduced exactly by their form those used in the West and dated by means of the sculptures of the tombs of the kings where they were fashioned. In each case, the stratigraphical dating coincides exactly with the Western dates. Writings on birch bark, discovered during the excavations and bearing the names of historical persons, also give eloquent confirmation of the stratigraphic dating. We shall discuss this in greater detail below.

The scope of this article does not allow us to acquaint the reader with all the aspects of the study of Novgorod's antiquities, and we are therefore focusing only on the most important ones.

#### REVEALING ANCIENT PROFESSIONS

The foundation of feudal relationships throughout the territory of central and southern Russia, a foundation recognized without reservation, is the landed property of the princes and the boyars; and the foundation of city life, the development of trades. Now certain researchers considered Novgorod exclusively as a center of European commerce, and commerce

for them was the unique basis of its historical development. It seemed that trading substituted completely for the professions and agriculture, since a market located at the crossroads could furnish all indispensable products. Only such industries as fishing, hunting, and the like appeared to be incontestably forms of the economic activity of the citizens.

It is evident that an exact idea of the economic life of Novgorod could be had only through excavations, for only the study of the numerous objects they revealed could help in fixing the production site. By comparing the quantity of objects brought into Novgorod and the products of the city itself, by comparing the importance of the different categories of imports, by clarifying the categories of objects needed most by the Novgorodians and which they had to import, we can finally determine the relationship which obtained at that time in the city's economy between the professions and commerce. The excavations permitted us to establish, first of all, that professions did exist in Novgorod, that they were varied, and that they had reached a high technical level.

Many and varied instruments used by artisans were discovered—not only instruments of general use but special ones as well, for working metals, wood, jewelry, leather, for engraving on bone, for weaving and shoemaking. The remains of artisans' shops and of the raw materials used, unfinished articles, and production wastes have all been found.

It is known that the working of iron is the principal trade—it produces not only items of daily use but, more importantly, work tools. Iron is the only metal whose deposits lie everywhere in eastern Europe (in the form of limonite). The discovery of iron blooms was often noted during the excavations at Novgorod. Nevertheless, that does not indicate the level reached by iron metallurgy in Novgorod itself. It was important to determine in what proportions they used their own iron



production and that of other cities. Spectral analysis has shown that in the iron objects discovered during the excavations in southern Russian cities we constantly see the presence of titanium and chrome, whereas nickel and molybdenum are typical of the iron of Novgorodian origin. These latter elements are found in seventy-four out of eighty-two sample articles of iron from the Novgorod collections, selected for analysis, whereas traces of titanium and chrome are found in only a few.

The study of the structure of iron objects undertaken by Koltchine has shown that the artisans of Novgorod made a variety of instruments and utensils and practiced a large number of technological operations: hammering, forge welding, thermal treating, lathe shaping, cold-cutting, polishing, soldering, coating with non-ferrous metal, incrusting non-ferrous and precious metals, and art-forging. They made, in addition, different kinds of steel articles. The chronological study of the development of this technology has revealed that all those processes were already current in the second half of the tenth century and in the beginning of the eleventh, a period when a high-level technique had been attained, one which was maintained through the sixteenth century. Moreover, the artisans of Novgorod simplified their technology knowingly when they had to produce *en masse* for the market.

In contrast to ironwork, the production of articles of non-ferrous metals and of jewelry could not make use of local raw materials and had to have recourse to importation, first from the East (in the tenth and eleventh centuries) and later from the West (after the eleventh century). Novgorod did not, however, import the finished articles but rather the raw material. The many finds of crucibles and foundry forms, and the particular form of non-ferrous and precious metal objects, show that they were made in Novgorod.

The same rule is applicable when we study the work done in

amber. This substance is not of local origin and reaches Novgorod and all of Russia through trade with the Baltic countries. But the work itself is specifically Russian, principally Novgorodian, as is shown by the discovery of a large number of discards, as well as crosses and the beads of semifinished amber necklaces.

Perhaps the most striking example is furnished by the study of wooden objects. In the Novgorod historical layer combs are constantly being found—760 of them in 1956. Most of the wooden ones go back to the tenth, eleventh, thirteenth, and fifteenth centuries, while combs made of bone are dated, as a general rule, to the twelfth century. According to Vikhrov's researches, the wood of these combs is largely the boxwood which grows on the northern slopes of the Caucasus and on the Caucasian shore of the Black Sea, and the ornamentation on them is of Novgorodian origin. The absence of wooden combs in the twelfth-century levels is explained by history—at that time the trade routes between Novgorod and the south had been cut by the Polovetzs. Novgorod's artisans, no longer receiving their customary raw material, had to replace it with bone.

Novgorod had its own important handicraft base, and its development was much less linked with external trade than we were led to believe before the excavations.

#### AN EDUCATED POPULACE

Before the Novgorod excavations our idea of the level of education in the Middle Age was far removed from reality. Researchers tended to compare this level for city-dwellers from the eleventh to the fifteenth century with that of the rural area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and assumed that only the richest urban circles, principally the clergy, knew how

to read and write. The diggings have caused a revision of this idea. Objects marked with the names or initials of their owners were found successively on different levels. Inscriptions have been found on cobblers' lasts, fishing leads and floats, cask covers, distaffs, and wooden dishes. The diversity of these articles, spread over a wide area, indicates that a vast circle of persons knew how to write. When we take into account the fact that objects were marked not so much for the purposes of the owners as for their neighbors, we must conclude that this circle of literate persons was still wider.

More exhaustive information has been supplied by the discovery of writings on birch bark, the principal find of the Novgorod archeological expedition. It seemed, before this discovery, that the written source of the history of the Russian Middle Age before the fifteenth century had been completely exhausted. The chronicles and official documents only depicted the history of the Middle Age in a clearly limited way, relating principally the political and military activity of the Russian sovereigns. The annals were in large part a chronicle of aristocratic families and could serve only to a slight degree as ethnographical documents. While we were able to establish the detailed biography of certain princes, hierarchical chiefs, and boyars, the simple citizen or the peasant lost even his name.

Now the individuality of a man with some education leaves traces in history: it is encountered again and again in his inscriptions, his letters, and his memorandums. Archeologists have long wondered whether the soil could preserve such documents down to our times. We have the answer. Parchment and paper generally decompose in the ground, and the text written in ink is lost. But such writings were not the only kind in the Middle Age. Moreover, they were costly, and their use was limited. Study of the writings of a more recent period (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) has shown that in Russia a

cheaper, and consequently more accessible, material was used—birch bark. Certain sources indicate that its use goes far back.

At Novgorod, birch-bark sheets are perfectly preserved and have attracted attention from the very beginning of the diggings. Each piece of birch bark—and tens of thousands are encountered—was studied. At the time this was prompted by a fact which appeared to be incontestable—that, if damp soil preserves birch bark, the inscriptions carried on the bark cannot, on the contrary, subsist in any clear manner, and one can only reconstitute them according to the faint traces left by ink which has been leached out by water. On July 26, 1951, the first inscription on birch bark was discovered, and it gave totally different evidence. It was seen that the inscriptions were made, not with ink, but with a stylus, just as inscriptions are lightly engraved on wax tablets or as graffiti are done on plaster. The instruments used for writing, which were bone or metal points, are sometimes highly ornamented. Dozens of examples have been found so far and are under special study.

This was a historical source in principle entirely new, for in the majority of cases the writings consisted of letters on the most varied and often most insignificant subjects. The oldest so far discovered has been dated as middle eleventh century, the most recent as belonging to the end of the fifteenth century. The character of these documents shows that they come from the most diverse milieux of Novgorod's society—from the *possadnik*, chief of the boyar republic, down to the simple weaver, anxious to ship out the order she has filled.

It is extremely important that these writings on birch bark do not in their assemblage constitute archives. They are constantly being found on different levels and in different sectors of the diggings. Just as today we throw away our notes and our rough drafts of accounts which we no longer need, so did the medieval Novgorodians dispose of their useless notes.

Since we raised earlier the question of the extent of education, let us note two circumstances. First, a considerable percentage of the writings stems from peasants and artisans. The author's profession is clearly indicated in them, and certain letters give technical recipes (for example, Document No. 288 contains a recipe for dyeing silks) or we find accounts relating to a craftsman's order for raw materials, or, again, notes about soil cultivation. In the second place, the authors or recipients of numerous documents are women, which can be an eloquent indication of the high level of education.

We have already mentioned the letter of a female weaver of the fifteenth century; here again are letters sent to Nastassia and those which she wrote. The first is from her husband, Boris, requesting that she send him his shirts which he has forgotten to take with him; the second, written by Nastassia, tells her parents of Boris' death. A letter from Piotr to Maria (fifteenth century) is important also for the economic history of Novgorod. Piotr has gone to Poozérié (on the shore of Lake Ilmen, southwest of Novgorod) to cut hay, but the residents of the area have seized his hay, and he begs his wife to send him a document confirming his rights to the piece of land. Evidently, Piotr was not one of the great landowners, in which case the villagers would not have dared to enter into conflict with him.

It is very interesting, in judging the development of education, to look at a whole series of birch-bark writings going back to the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth. They come from a small boy, from six to ten years of age, named Onfim, who was learning to write. We have fifteen letters containing the alphabet, lessons in writing by syllables, and the first model letters. Being a schoolboy, he divided his attention during the lessons between his work and his penchant for drawing in the blank corners of his sheet of birch bark—he draws little men, men on horseback riding down



*Birch bark on which a 12th-century schoolboy, named Onfim, practiced his alphabet, and occasionally drew his own picture.*

their enemies, and even a portrait of himself, disguised as a fantastic animal. These sketches gave the clue to his age. The expedition has collected other remains of schoolwork—exercises for boys studying in other grades, the cover of a penbox showing a model alphabet and belonging to the end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth, and even a silly schoolboy joke of the time, a cryptographic inscription on birch bark. The abundance of these documents clearly indicates that the teaching of reading and writing to children was one of the major concerns of medieval Novgorod.

The birch-bark documents collected so far have now become a base from which we may draw important historical conclusions. Through topographical study of them, we can learn the names of the owners of the sites where the excavations are made. Often writings addressed to the same individual are

found in the limits of the same piece of ground. Analysis of certain writings has permitted us to establish the fact that two large pieces of property belonged to the family of the boyars Ontsiforovitch, known through the annals and other documents. From this family there came eminent *possadniks* of Novgorod, among them Ontsifor Loukitch, famous in the city's history toward the middle of the fourteenth century, and his son, Youri Ontsiforovitch, a *possadnik* at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Writings sent to Ontsifor and to Youri, as well as to other members of this line of boyars, were found.

All the writings connected with this family offer great interest, since for the first time the researcher is led into the circle of the daily preoccupations of the boyar aristocracy when it was in power. Analysis indicates clearly the real basis on which the boyars' power and that of the state of Novgorod rested. Not once do these writings treat of mercantile matters—on the contrary, all have more or less to do with great landed property.

Document No. 94 is addressed to Youri Ontsoforovitch by the peasants, who complain to their master about his overseer: "Nothing pleases him," they write. No. 97, also sent to Youri, concerns the sale of rye. No. 167 is sent by the miller of the village of Zlostitsy which belongs to the *possadnik*; he begs Youri to take pity on him and not to send another miller to replace him.

A complete series of writings is addressed to Mikhail, the son of Youri Ontsiforovitch. In No. 157 the peasants object to an order issued by the boyar concerning the transfer of an inclosed piece of land. No. 242 does not bear the addressee's name, but it was found on property belonging to Mikhail. It concerns dependent peasants, subject to state labor, who are awaiting the boyar's orders for threshing rye and who complain about the poor condition of draft animals: "Those who have



horses have poor ones; others have none." Document No. 297 indicates that a certain Serguéi is informing Mikhail Yourievitch of the theft of a millstone for milling rye. No. 301 reminds us of the doleful state of the peasant class, announcing to Mikhail, who is called here the son of the *possadnik*, that half his domain is empty and that the other peasants are making ready to flee and are begging the boyar to reduce taxes. Document No. 311 describes the whole system for us, indicating particularly that between Mikhail Yourievitch and the peasants there is a small feudal holder.

We have cited here several documents sent to persons already known from other sources. The list of writings concerning real estate can be made many times longer. Land is the principal preoccupation, and this interest is not limited to the boyar aristocracy of Novgorod. By studying documents of this kind, Artsikhovsky has come to the conclusion that *the major portion of the population of this city was composed of feudal holders, large and small. They resided in Novgorod, where they were citizens and belonged to the popular assembly (vetché).* In our opinion, this circumstance explains in large measure the particular forms of the state of Novgorod, which rested on a wide base, composed of many classes of large, average, and small landowners.

Writings dealing with commerce offer much interest, particularly those which show that the specialization of trade was quite advanced. The merchants of Novgorod in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were going through an important stage which led them from highly diversified into extremely specialized commerce. For example, writings concerning the fish trade show an exclusive interest on the part of some dealers in lake trout, while others specialize in sturgeon. Dealers have a large number of professional fishermen under their control.

Certain documents bring in new and interesting information



on Novgorod's trade with the outside. Document No. 125 (end of the fourteenth century), for example, is the request of a certain Marina to her son to buy her some *zendien*—the term used for a cotton stuff woven in the village of Zenden near Boukhara in Central Asia. A document from the early twelfth century concerns far-ranging journeys of Novgorod merchants into the interior of the Russian territories.

Other writings mention political events of the history of Novgorod. The owner of an inclosed piece of land, where excavations are now being conducted, was a tax farmer for the lands of Karelia, which paid tribute to Novgorod. In the levels corresponding to his time (first half of the fourteenth century) several documents were found bearing Karelian names, as well as letters sent to Novgorod by Karelians. One of these documents can be dated exactly, for it mentions the peace just signed between Novgorod and Sweden, in the days of Prince Youri. With the same expressions, the annals relate the peace of 1338, whose conclusion did not definitively decide the political affiliation of certain frontier tribes of Karelia. And, in fact, the writing in question, sent to the tax farmer before his departure for the north, urges him to exercise extreme prudence and compliance in levying tribute on those territories.

Other documents concern justice and discuss questions of depositions or tell of punishments which have been inflicted. Another series consists of wills of different persons.

The terminology found gives a wealth of information important for understanding the system of measures and especially the history of the circulation of money in the Middle Age, for monetary units are constantly mentioned, and certain of the terms have not been known before. The writings on birch bark have enriched knowledge with a long series of unknown names; they have also taught us many new words which were not listed in vocabularies of the medieval Russian language. But

their principal value lies in the fact that they are unique documents on mores and customs of the period, and they bring the researcher into the area of the daily interests of people who disappeared many centuries ago. Thus they bring an epoch back to life.

#### THE "MUSEUM CITY"

Novgorod is often called a "museum city." It is indeed an original and unprecedented museum of medieval art, its many old churches constituting the principal element of its whole. The succession of architectural styles can be followed almost uninterruptedly over a long period, from the eleventh century to our own day. The icons and frescoes created by Novgorodian painters are universally known, as well as the magnificent examples of the chiseler's art, preserved on chasubles. During the Middle Age, Novgorod attained one of the highest points in Russian art. However, its art monuments were subject to the same influence as the annals. The churches and their ornamentation, the icons and artistic vessels, were ordered by the boyars and the higher clergy of the city. Thus they show not only the masterful skill of Novgorod's artists but also the tastes of distinct social levels. To what extent was aesthetic perception common to medieval Novgorodians? That question has appeared to be insolvable.

Excavations carried out in other Russian cities had led to the deduction that there was a deep contrast between the people's artistic taste and the aesthetic concepts of the richest segment of the society. The reason for this had been the absence of art objects in the archeological finds of ancient Russian dwellings. An important circumstance, however, was overlooked—man of the Middle Age was surrounded by a world of wooden objects which could not be preserved unless the historical layer met

the requisite conditions. Through diggings in cities located on dry ground, archeologists were unable to get any idea of the ornamentation and the furnishing of the dwellings or of the utensils and household items then in use. It is precisely the ornamentation of objects used by man during his whole lifetime which can best reveal the level of his aesthetic education.

The Novgorod excavations have allowed us to amass a huge collection of the most diverse objects, all having the common feature of ornamentation. Most of the objects made of wood—whether spoons, combs, bowls, parts of wagons, or furniture—are covered with sculptured designs. Often an engraved tracery design completely covers the article and in most cases is executed with a sure and accustomed hand and with a developed sense of composition. The excavators found a large number of decorated door frames and tapestries in birch bark, set off with ornamentation. Highly worked are the cradles and the birch-bark fishing floats and basket covers. The desire to embellish often gave birth to true works of art which became a part of the daily life of the simple city dweller.

In this connection we can cite certain remains of wooden flatware from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries on which dragons and other monsters are perfectly depicted, a wooden spoon bearing a finely executed design of a horseman, and dippers with handles worked into the shape of monsters. A true masterpiece is the sculptured wooden head of a clean-shaven man, apparently a portrait, going back to the twelfth or thirteenth century.

Bone objects offer the same interest. In the eyes of a Novgorodian of the Middle Age, work in bone, like that in wood, offered an opportunity for applying his artistic skills. At present, a large collection of bone plates of different uses has been assembled. Perfectly depicted on them are dragons and other

monsters, and there are bone handles in the form of stylized birds' heads, etc.

A highly important analogy is seen in the way in which ordinary objects and religious objects are ornamented. We find again the same motifs in the interior ornamentation of stone church walls and windows. As for book ornamentation, it derives entirely from that of ordinary wooden objects.

A most interesting find, and one which has profoundly modified the ideas we had of the character and the ways of the development of Russian art, is that of two wooden columns found in the level corresponding to the middle of the eleventh century. They had served first to support the flooring of a house in the early part of the century and had then been cut into circular blocks to serve as street paving, the form in which they were discovered. The surface of the columns is entirely covered with a chiseled design of wide interlacing bands in which are set medallions, one showing a centaur, another a griffin.

While the tracery on the columns is a current motif with the Slavs and is well known on Balkan stone monuments and on numerous objects coming from the Novgorod diggings (beginning at the earliest levels), the figures on the medallions reveal a detailed analogy with the chiseling on stone in the churches of Vladimir-Souzdal at the end of the twelfth century and in the early thirteenth, and particularly with the designs of monsters found on the walls of the cathedral of Saint George in Youriev-Polski, built in 1234. These analogies show an artistic unity, a close bond between outstanding architectural monuments and ordinary objects which have artistic interest. And their importance is considerable for still another reason.

The stone reliefs of the churches of Vladimir-Souzdal belong to the great creations of Russian medieval art and have long had the effect of magnificent flowers sprung forth in a



*Carved bone box, 14th century.*

desert, for their originality did not seem to have been nourished by the sap of Russian art. We found no close analogy with other more recent Russian monuments. For that reason many scholars tended, in the course of discussions on the origin of these reliefs, to establish a correlation with Western or Caucasian art. It has now become evident that these works of art are bound to the Russian soil, for their prototype is being rediscovered repeatedly in the chiseling on wood which researchers had almost never seen prior to the excavations at Novgorod. The Novgorod column with its griffon and centaur is two hundred years older than the reliefs of Vladimir-Souzdal. In Novgorod, wood-chiseling was not transformed into stone-chiseling, since the material used for the construction of Novgorodian churches was the soft milling stone from Ilmen. The Vladimir architecture makes use of a harder stone, better suited to artistic chiseling.

The Novgorod excavations also afford interesting results under the heading of "methodology." Their scope has always posed many problems in connection with the organizing of

the work. During archeological diggings over a large surface, the evidence-bearing cover being quite thick, the greatest efforts and costs have to do with the removal of earth which has been examined. Its transportation becomes more difficult as the diggings extend in breadth and in depth.

That is why the Novgorod expedition insisted from the very beginning on mechanizing the work to the greatest possible extent. It goes without saying that the only "mechanism" acceptable for actual digging is, and will always be, human hands. To facilitate the work, a large number of conveyor belts is used to remove earth from the interior of the excavation and bring it to the outside. At great depths, the earth is removed by means of carts and electric skip hoists. The surface is cleared of mounds of debris from the preceding year by the most efficient means, the bulldozer. The expedition's experience in applying mechanization has been described in detail in Soviet archeological literature and is being adopted by other expeditions. The collections assembled during the diggings, because of their great size, permit the application of scientific methods, such as spectral and structural analysis of objects of antiquity.

In recent years an effort has also been made to verify chronological conclusions through the study of the magnetic property of the old ceramics. The study of numerous vestiges of old revetments and constructions will also make possible the establishment of a dendrochronological dating system for Novgorod and the surrounding areas.

The expedition has important tasks to finish. In particular, it must complete the diggings in the suburb of Nérévo. We should also like to terminate researches on the site of the ancient domains where only partial excavations have been conducted, especially on the properties of the two *possadniks*. The expedition plans next to transfer digging to another quarter of the city, where an important sector must come under research.

By comparing the results obtained, we will be able to state definitively those conclusions already reached in a general way concerning the character of this medieval city. Finally, there is a great need for augmenting the Novgorod excavations by archeological study of the medieval rural area of the state of Novgorod. This will be one of the next important tasks.

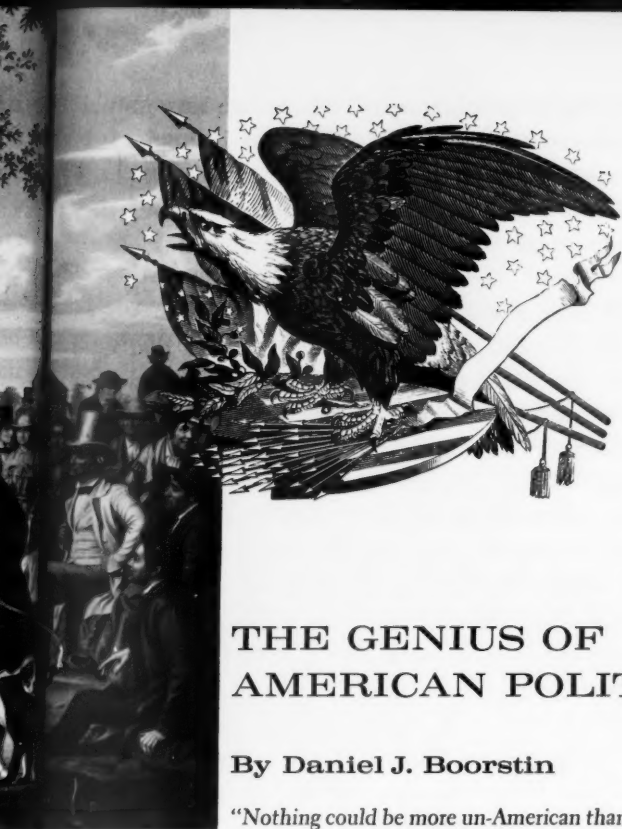
The time is fast approaching when medieval Novgorod will be, for the most part, an open book, making known to us the names of its former residents, their thoughts, their way of life, and the insights we have, until recently, so greatly lacked.



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**T**HE genius of American democracy comes not from any special virtue of the American people but from the unprecedented opportunities of this continent and from a peculiar and unrepeatable combination of historical circumstances. These circumstances have given our institutions their character and their virtues. The very same facts which explain these virtues explain also our inability to make a "philosophy" of them.





## THE GENIUS OF AMERICAN POLITICS

**By Daniel J. Boorstin**

*"Nothing could be more un-American than to urge other countries to imitate America," says this prize-winning historian.*

They explain our lack of interest in political theory and why we are doomed to failure in any attempt to sum up our way of life in slogans and dogmas. They explain, therefore, why we have nothing in the line of a theory that can be exported to other peoples of the world.

My thesis is that nothing could be more un-American than to urge other countries to imitate America. We should not

ask them to adopt our "philosophy" because we have no philosophy which can be exported. My argument is simple. It is based on forgotten commonplaces of American history—facts so obvious that we no longer see them. I argue, in a word, that American democracy is unique. It possesses a "genius" all its own. . . .

As Americans, our indifference to grand theories has been possible partly because we have taken for granted that God himself drew the plans of our career and marked its outlines in our history and on our very ground. That is what I have called the sense of "givenness."

"Givenness" is the belief that values in America are in some way or other automatically defined: given by certain facts of geography or history peculiar to us. The notion has three faces. First is the notion that we have received our values as a gift from the past; that the earliest settlers or Founding Fathers equipped our nation at its birth with a perfect and complete political theory, adequate to all our future needs.

The second is the notion that in America we receive values as a gift from the present, that our theory is always implicit in our institutions. This is the idea that the "American Way of Life" harbors an "American Way of Thought" which can do us for a political theory, even if we never make it explicit or never are in a position to confront ourselves with it. It is the notion that to Americans political theory never appears in its nakedness but always clothed in the peculiar American experience. We like to think that, from the shape of the living experience, we can guess what lies underneath and that such a guess is good enough—perhaps actually better than any naked theory. While according to the first axiom of "givenness" our values are the gift of our history, according to the second they are the gift of our landscape.

The third part of "givenness" is a belief which links these two axioms. It is a belief in the *continuity* or homogeneity of our history. It is the quality of our experience which makes us see our national past as an uninterrupted continuum of similar events, so that our past merges indistinguishably into our present. This sense of continuity is what makes it easy for us to accept the two first axioms at the same time: the idea of a preformed original theory given to us by the Founding Fathers and the idea of an implicit theory always offered us by our present experience. Our feeling of continuity in our history makes it easy for us to see the Founding Fathers as our contemporaries. It induces us to draw heavily on the materials of our history, but always in a distinctly non-historical frame of mind. . . .

The experience of the New England Puritans, despite its remoteness, is among the most instructive episodes of our history for helping us understand the place of theory in American political life. For the Puritans were the first, and perhaps the last, sizable community in American history to import from Europe a fully developed and explicit social dogma and to try to live by it on this continent. The fate of Puritanism in America thus gives us our unique opportunity to see what kind of success and what kind of failure a self-conscious and comprehensive theory has actually met here.

If ever there was a dogma fit to arm a weak settlement on a savage frontier, it was Puritanism. And yet the very success of the Puritan community on that frontier was to be the undoing of their philosophy. Their success induced them gradually to seek their standards in their own experience, to make what they had accomplished the yardstick of what they might have, or ought to have, accomplished. The pragmatic spirit, the belief in "givenness," seeped into the interstices of the Puritan dogma and was gradually to dissolve it into a more general

faith in the magical definition of American purpose out of the American success. . . .

The mastery of nature depended on the ability to understand rather than on the ability to persuade. The Big Lie could not help against a snowstorm; it would kill no wolves and grow no corn. Therefore, it was less important to make a grand plan, to make generalities glitter, than to know what was what and how to control the forces of nature. In mastering the wilderness, in building institutions and communities, the second and third generation of New England Puritans became somewhat less anxious to dot all the i's and cross all the t's in their theology. They became more and more responsive to the values which seemed to emerge from their daily lives. The Puritan experience thus shows some persistent characteristics of American history which have encouraged belief in the implicitness of values. Already in that earliest age we see a growing sense of "givenness."

There is a subtler sense in which the Puritan experience symbolizes the American approach to values. For the circumstances which have nourished man's sense of mastery over his *natural* environment have on this continent somehow led him away from dogmatism, from the attempt to plan and control the *social* environment. In this our history may have been distinctive. The two other nations in recent times which seem to have made a fetish of technology started in reverse order. The Nazis and Communists started with blueprints for society and turned to technology as the only means to attain their ends. For our political thought it has been a happy fact that the opposite was true. Nature had to be mastered before society could even survive. . . .

We are accustomed to think of the Revolution as the great age of American political thought. It may therefore be something of a shock to realize that it did not produce in America

a single important treatise on political theory. Men like Franklin and Jefferson, universal in their interests, active and spectacularly successful in developing institutions, were not fertile as political philosophers. . . . The American Revolution was in a very special way conceived as both a vindication of the British past and an affirmation of an American future. The British past was contained in ancient and living institutions rather than in doctrines; and the American future was never to be contained in a theory. The Revolution was thus a prudential decision taken by men of principle rather than the affirmation of a theory. What British institutions meant did not need to be articulated; what America might mean was still to be discovered. This continuity of American history was to make a sense of "givenness" easier to develop; for it was this continuity which had made a new ideology of revolution seem unnecessary.

Not the least remarkable feature of the Civil War—apart from the fact that it occurred at all—is that it was so unproductive of political theory. This, the bloodiest single civil war of the nineteenth century, was also perhaps the least theoretical. The sectional character of the conflict had tended to make sociology—the description of things as they were—take the place of the uncharted exploration of things as they ought to be. It also prevented the crisis from propagating panaceas. This was another example of the recurrent tendency in American history to identify the "is" with the "ought," to think of values and a theory of society as implicit in facts about society.

At the same time, the federal character of the struggle, the fact that it took place within a functioning federal order, confined much of the theoretical discussion within the area of constitutional law, of the search for the true original image of the Constitution. This, too, discouraged American thinkers of the age (excepting a vagrant Thoreau) from making confusion

in the market place an excuse for going off into the solitude of the woods to rethink the whole problem of institutions. The sense of "givenness" was reinforced. In this case it meant the empirical tradition, the reliance on constitutionalism, and an unwillingness to remake institutions out of whole cloth.

The continuity of American political thought—which included the American way of *not* philosophizing about politics—was to stay. The mere fact that the nation had survived the ordeal of civil war seemed itself to prove the strength of the thread which bound the present to the past and to confirm the common destiny of the nation. . . .

We thus find engraved in our national consciousness the belief that values have somehow emerged from the American experience; that we do not need American philosophers because we already have an American philosophy, implicit in the American Way of Life.

The belief in "givenness" is not unrelated to the more familiar idea of an American destiny, the notion that America has had a preordained role in the world. But the two ideas are by no means the same. What has in the past given a local flavor to our concept of destiny has been precisely that the destiny was to fulfil purposes which seemed impossible and/or unnecessary for any human mind to comprehend. Conviction that America has a mission to mankind was perhaps never stronger than today.

#### THE DECLINING SENSE OF "GIVENNESS"

Some of the bewilderment in which we find ourselves is due to the fact that, while belief in destiny has been growing, the belief in "givenness" has declined. We who have claimed a Manifest Destiny now find that the destiny seems suddenly to have lost its manifestness. More than ever we feel that we are

cast in a great role, but, for the first time, we begin to wonder if we ourselves may not have some responsibility for composing the plot.

We can date this decline in our sense of "givenness" from somewhere around the end of the nineteenth century. It was then that historians began to discover what had distinguished the history of our institutions. The uniqueness of American history was fully discovered only after, and perhaps because, what had given us that uniqueness seemed about to disappear.

The historical skill and poetic imagination of Frederick Jackson Turner then produced an interpretation that was more an autopsy than an anatomy of our institutions. Turner's famous lecture, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," which he delivered in 1893, was a declaration of the uniqueness of the American past. It was equally a prophecy of a lack of uniqueness in the American future. The critical fact which had made the history of the United States different from that of Europe was ceasing to exist. Uniqueness would henceforth have to be transmitted through institutions shaped by a unique past, which would enter on a more cosmopolitan future. "And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history." Increasing urbanism, increasing reliance on government, and the growth of large combinations both of capital and of labor were symptoms that America might thenceforth go the way of Europe.

The peculiar American experience in dealing with the West was what, according to Turner, had "vitalized all American democracy, and . . . brought it into sharp contrasts with the democracies of history, and with those modern efforts of Europe to create an artificial democratic order by legislation."

Our foreign relations were pushing us in the same direction. As we became an actor on the world stage, we were under pressures to defend our institutions before the world. For the first time it appeared that we might have a duty not merely to fulfil our destiny but to describe it.

The spectacle of a professor of political science in the chair of the President of the United States was a symptom of these new tendencies in American life. The phenomenon of President Woodrow Wilson, a man who had some reputation for philosophizing about democracies and governments in general, was something new. And it was something that could hardly have occurred in the United States before the disappearance of the frontier.

Even before the first World War, actually as early as the turn of the century, there were attempts to provide a philosophical substitute for the frontier. Perhaps the most significant, and surely one of the most strenuous, of such efforts was that by Josiah Royce. We have some clue to what was happening to the sense of "givenness" if we compare the flavor of his writing with that of the great American yea-sayers of the early and middle nineteenth century.

Those earlier yea-sayers had, on the whole, found it enough to *affirm*—vigorously, eloquently, paradoxically—without defining too sharply what it was they were affirming. Emerson, for instance, in his plea for refreshment in his "American Scholar" (1837) asked that "the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts"; he complained that "we are embarrassed with second thoughts." In a word, he asked Americans to be themselves; then they would be the best of men and the purest of Americans. Whitman, too, a few years later, was singing of "oneself" and of the bridges and rivers and cities and fields and everything that surrounded the American. If the American only would not resist the influence of his envi-



ronment, he would be a man. Carl Sandburg, whose first volume of poems appeared in 1916, was one of the latest of this "givenness" school—and perhaps the last who could so readily find values emerging from the total American experience.

#### SEARCH FOR A PHILOSOPHY

From the notion that "what you don't know won't hurt you," the notion that the common experience was enough, Americans moved to the fear that, if they did not discover where they were going, they might find themselves going nowhere at all, or even in the wrong direction. To men like Josiah Royce (who had been raised in California in the era of Henry George) it no longer seemed enough in 1908 to urge men to be themselves or to draw in the essence of the American scene. In his *Philosophy of Loyalty*, speaking in a vocabulary he had learned in Germany, Royce sought, with metaphysical clarity and something like Kantian subtlety, to lay bare community ideals.

Now, it seemed, one had a double problem: first, to define the task; and only then try to accomplish it. There was a novel and transatlantic sound to Royce's plea to "bring back to the first rank of interest once more the problems of Goethe's *Faust* and of Kant's *Critique*." Royce asked for a clear description of "the true goal of men's actions." "Send us the thinker," he pleaded in his "Decay of Earnestness" (1881), "that can show us just what in life is most worthy of our toil, just what makes man's destiny more than poor and comic, just what is the ideal that we ought to serve; let such a thinker point out to us plainly that ideal, and then say, in a voice that we must hear, 'Work, work for that; it is the highest'—then such a thinker will have saved our age from one-sidedness, and have given it eternal significance."

The weaknesses of Royce's philosophy were a symbol of the difficulties confronting an American social philosopher. While his philosophy of loyalty provided an absolutist strongbox for American values, when one opened the box, one found it contained almost nothing: he urged his readers to be loyal to the principal of loyalty. . . .

With each national crisis of the twentieth century the demand for explicitness has recurred. During the last ten years we have heard more and more voices asking for a "democratic faith" or a philosophy for democracy. Many Americans have come to feel that they ought to have a personal philosophy adequate in clarity and subtlety to the new responsibility of every American for the state of the world. It is no less the sense of national power than the sense of personal inadequacy that has driven us to seek clear and outspoken doctrines to guide us. The decline in the sense of "givenness" has made our problem acute.

We have found symptoms of this decline in some turning from the generalized religion that Americans historically have sought to a more precise, more theological, and more dogmatic religion. Among Protestants we find a growing interest in attempts, like those of Reinhold Niebuhr, to sharpen and elaborate their theology. Among Catholics, a desire to invigorate their doctrine, an interest in the writings of Jacques Maritain and Yves Simon, and the phenomenon of Thomas Merton. Among Jews, a self-conscious quest for redefinition, exemplified in the success of *Commentary* magazine. We have seen a general movement of many intellectuals toward Catholicism, illustrated by a number of notable conversions. Many of these efforts, including a growing interest in political theory and philosophy in our colleges, are symptoms of the declining sense of "givenness," of the attempt of individuals to attain for

themselves, even at great personal cost, the kind of thing which until recently seemed to be given to all Americans gratis.

Is the sense of "givenness," which I have described briefly, about to disappear? Can we preserve it? If not, what can take its place? I can see two, and only two, alternatives.

The first would be to answer the demand for a democratic philosophy directly, by trying to build one. But, as I have tried to show, we are traditionally ill qualified for such an enterprise. Moreover, any such attempt to agree on the tenets of our agreement is liable to be self-defeating. When people already agree, the effort to define what they agree on is more likely to produce conflict than accord. Precise definitions are more often the end than the beginning of agreement.

The second possibility is to try to bring to the surface those attitudes which have been latent in the notion of "givenness" itself, to discover the general truths about institutions by which we have actually lived. If anything can be done to perpetuate the virtues of our political thought, in my opinion it must be along these latter lines.

#### THE "SEAMLESSNESS" OF CULTURE

It is important at this point to prepare ourselves for an anti-climax. When we penetrate the Holy of Holies of our national faith, we must not expect the glittering jewels and filigreed relics of a pagan temple. The story is told that, when the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem fell in 63 B.C. and Pompey invaded the Holy of Holies, he found to his astonishment that it was empty. This was, of course, a symbol of the absence of idolatry, which was the essential truth of Judaism. Perhaps the same surprise awaits the student of American culture, if he finally manages to penetrate the arcanum of our belief. And for a similar reason.

Far from being disappointed, we should be inspired that in an era of idolatry, when so many nations have filled their sanctuaries with ideological idols, we have had the courage to refuse to do so. What I shall try to pass off on you as the content of the *sanctum* ought more precisely to be described as something very different: namely, the tenets which have enabled us to keep the *sanctum* empty.

Before I describe these tenets, I should briefly indicate what I mean by the idolatry from which we have managed to keep ourselves free. It is the idolatry which would put the thorough plan of a particular generation in place of the accumulating wisdom of tradition and institutions. Its twin deities are the Goddess of Reason (worshiped in the French Revolution), and the God of Force and Uniformity (worshiped in more recent European revolutions).

The modern life of this pagan cult can be traced back to the Romantic movement of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. To make any headway against the institutional debris which covered the European landscape in those days; to take even short, halting steps toward a democratic, equalitarian society; to allow the freedom and initiative without which modern capitalism would have been inconceivable, it was perhaps necessary to impress on men an exaggerated sense of their power to remake society. Rousseau was, appropriately, the patron saint of Romantic arrogance.

Political dreamers in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries *had* to lead a rich fantasy life, precisely because their *real* political life was so frustrating. But America was the land of dreams-come-true; for the oppressed European, life in America was itself fantasy. It was not necessary here to develop a theory to prove that man could begin anew, that decent community was possible; life in America seemed itself sufficient proof.

It was easy enough for Rousseau or Wordsworth or Shelley to assert that man could remake himself by making over his institutions. In Europe such an assertion would be free from risk of disproof, precisely because such an opportunity could never really exist on that continent. Whenever an attempt at wholesale revolution failed or bred tyranny, one could charge it to the fact that the revolution had not been wholesale enough or that its high purposes had been blighted by a Napoleon, a Stalin, or a Hitler.

But in America the opportunity was real; and men—even the most optimistic—could observe with their own eyes the limitations on man's power to remake his institutions. Because we in America, more than other peoples of modern history, seemed situated to start life anew, we have been better able to see how much man inevitably retains of his past. For here, even with an unexampled opportunity for cultural rebirth, the American has remained plainly the inheritor of European laws, culture, and institutions.

America has thus been both the laboratory and the nemesis of romanticism. While the American experience would surely dishearten a visionary like Thoreau, it could actually encourage a Puritan or a Jeffersonian. The belief that man could change his institutions at will and that from such changes utopia would flow was perhaps the most basic of the romantic illusions to dissolve in America.

But this was not all. Take the concept of the Noble Savage, the anthropological corollary of the opening words of Rousseau's *Émile*: "God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil." The American could know that a wild, new environment would not cure all the ills of man's nature. It was easy and even witty to praise the savage from a European drawing-room; but Americans who had been the targets of the Indian's arrows and had seen him in his habitat

would (except for a rare James Fenimore Cooper) find the idea of the Noble Savage a pretty bad joke. One could provide still other examples of how the American experience itself has been a providential solvent of romantic illusions. Only when men were forced to live out their illusions did they see how illusory they really were.

Nothing could be more absurd than to try to make of the isolated utopian communities in American history anything like a great tradition of utopianism in the main stream of our thought. Some of our historians, desperately searching for articulateness and for ties with the European traditions of socialism, have attempted just this. They miss the essential point that the whole American experience has been utopian.

We have, of course, had our New Harmonys, our Brook Farms, and our Oneidas; but these have been, at most, minor tributaries of our thought. Their most important legacy has probably been a deepened skepticism of all such enterprises.

The one conspicuously successful movement in American history which has had a utopian character has been the Mormon church. We need not here ask how much its doctrinal compromises have had to do with its survival. But, in accounting for the remarkable success of Mormonism, we must remember that Mormon theology supplements the Old and the New Testaments with a gospel which declares the Promised Land to be America.

In trying to explain how we have managed to keep our sanctum empty of idols, I cannot, of course, offer any rounded political philosophy, for that is precisely what we have not had. But it may be possible to describe an attitude—a kind of principle implicit in the idea of “givenness”—which has enabled us to avoid idolatry. I am afraid the principle is extremely prosaic, but that does not make it any less true. Actually, it is the converse of what some cultivated European critics have called an

American weakness: namely, our ineptness at making distinctions. Whether or not this be a philosophic weakness, its opposite is surely a virtue, namely, our tendency to see things as wholes. This might be called a sense for the "seamlessness" of experience. Aspects of experience which are elsewhere sharply distinguished here seem to merge into each other: the private and the public, the religious and the political, even—as I have suggested—the "is" and the "ought," the world of fact and the world of fancy, of science and of morals.

The principle of the "seamlessness" of experience has two elements. This sense of wholeness, the feeling for the continuum of experience, is expressed in relation both to space and to time.

First, it is a way of describing the organic nature of society. This is the sense of seamlessness of experience in space: that institutions, and especially political institutions, are intimately related to the peculiar environment which nourishes them. It comes from sensitivity to the fact that American values arise out of a frontier, that the politics and culture of the city are one thing, those of the country another; that the problems of America may be of one kind, those of Europe of another.

The notion is pragmatic: good political institutions are those which enable a people to seize their unique opportunities. It is conservative: it presupposes a certain national character or destiny as always in a sense given, given by the circumstances of geography and history. Its corollary is a suspicion of grand schemes which seek to make over the character of men or institutions. American experience has engraved in our consciousness the idea of culture as a matrix; our politics, religion, economy, and ideas all seem so obviously related to the special conditions of life in America that we have had forced on us the connection of *all* institutions with their context.

Thus it is much harder to understand many institutions and

ideas here than in countries where the aspects of experience are more sharply distinguished. As I have suggested, the boundaries of religion and politics are vaguer here than elsewhere. Or take our concept of equality, which many have called the central American value. No sooner does one describe a subject like this and try to separate it for study than one finds it diffusing and evaporating into the general atmosphere. "Equality," what does it mean? In the United States it has been taken for a fact and an ideal, a moral imperative and a sociological datum, a legal principle and a social norm. It describes a continuum from physiology at one end to theology at the other.

The very concept of federalism is based on the principle of the "seamlessness" of culture: it assumes the necessity of allowing much autonomy to each region. It arises from awareness that regions are different and that different regions must have somewhat different institutions. Thus our federalism actually implies an organic approach to society, the realization that institutions always grow out-of-doors in a particular climate and cannot be carried about in a flower pot.

The second aspect of the principle of "seamlessness" asserts the historical continuity of institutions. This is the counterpart in time of the organic concept in space. As we have seen, even the great crises in our history—the Revolution and the Civil War—have expressed and affirmed this continuity. I have referred elsewhere to the old saw that the European has a sense of relation to the past, while the American is set down, as it were, without foundations. But that view is superficial, based on the calendar rather than on the meaning of the past to living people.

For, as I have suggested, much of what the European sees of the past—especially today—emphasizes his separation from it. His past is longer, but at least his recent past is far more motley and discontinuous than ours. Many crucial events of recent



European history have been attempts at historical amnesia: each successive epoch denies that the preceding age expressed its true self or sometimes even refuses to admit that the earlier age existed.

The French Revolution of the eighteenth century, in its radical phase, was a strenuous denial of the past; French history in the nineteenth century was an alternation of violently republican and violently monarchical spirits; even today there the basic opposition of political parties is among groups which stand for radically different images of the national history. In Germany, especially during the last century, the oscillations have been more violent and much more costly both to that country and to mankind; the Nazis stood for the German Volk and seemed so to the majority of Germans for at least a decade; they made an effort to forget or even deny 1848; now, of course, the "denial" of the Nazi past is equally enthusiastic. Even in Great Britain, the fall of the British Empire and the coming of socialism have dug a gulf between past and present.

How different is our American relation to our past! If our past has been more brief, we feel much closer to it than do the peoples of Europe. Most of what we see of our past reinforces our feeling of continuity and oneness with it. In a certain sense, of course, the Civil War dug a gulf in our history; but it is a gulf which, for different reasons, both northerners and southerners have been eager to deny. We have seen how North and South each considered the war its own way of affirming the single true American past; and the matter has remained discussible, not in revolutionary, but in legal, language.

Our periods of national glory and power have not been periods of explicit denial of the preceding stages. Washington and Jefferson and Adams and Jackson and Lincoln have seemed the contemporaries of all their great successors. This would even be true of the New Deal. According to the ortho-

dox Republican interpretation, many of Franklin D. Roosevelt's measures (at least the more successful ones) were actually initiated by Herbert Hoover.

The American who goes to Europe cannot but be shocked by the casualness with which Frenchmen or Italians view the possibility of violent change in their society. Of course, if this had not been so, life might have been unbearable for them during the last century. The unspoken question lies beneath all their personal decisions: What might be the consequences of this or that course of action if society should suddenly become Communist or Fascist, or whatnot? For the European the past, and therefore the future, seems a kind of grab bag of extreme alternatives. Because for us the past is a solid stalk out of which our present seems to grow, the lines of our future seem clearer and more inevitable.

It is not surprising that we have no enthusiasm for plans to make society over. We have actually made a new society without a plan. Or, more precisely, why should we make a five-year plan for ourselves when God seems to have had a thousand-year plan ready-made for us?

Our history inclines us, then, to see fascism and nazism and communism not merely as bad philosophies but as violations of the essential nature of institutions. To us institutions have appeared as a natural continuum with the non-institutional environment and the historical past. From this point of view, the proper role of the citizen and the statesman here is one of conservation and reform rather than of invention. He is free to occupy himself with the means of improving his society; for there is relatively little disagreement on ends.

Nothing could be more mistaken than to assume that such an approach need be smug, uncritical, or unprogressive. On the contrary, no one is more smug than the crusader. If you have ever talked to a thorough Communist or Fascist, you know

what I mean. The True Believer always seems to think that his mere possession of his golden nuggets is an overwhelming virtue. On the other hand, the man with his eye on institutions can never fail to recognize his own inadequacy. He sees the complexity of his task and the constant need for improvement. He can never rest in the puffing satisfaction of righteous knowledge.

If what I have said is correct, the accidents of the American past fit us not only for a skepticism of doctrinaire politics but also for a lively sense of tradition. As T. S. Eliot has said, tradition depends on the historical sense, and "the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence."

Through no special virtue or effort of our own, we may be peculiarly fitted for the role which we are called on to play. But our attitude to institutions can survive only so long as we preserve our sense for the uniqueness of the American experience. A wholesome conservatism rests on knowledge of what is peculiarly valuable in the things to be conserved. The science of uniqueness is the study of history, and our feeling for the uniqueness of our culture will be proportionate to our knowledge of our past.

#### THE GENIUS OF AMERICAN POLITICS

The doom which awaited the Roman Empire, according to C. N. Cochrane, "was that of a civilization which failed to understand itself and was, in consequence, dominated by a haunting fear of the unknown." Much the same could be said for us. Our intellectual insecurity, our feeling of philosophical inadequacy, may be explained at least in part by our failure to understand ourselves. This failure is due in some measure to our readiness to accept the European clichés about us.

We all know that people are prone to parade their weaknesses as if they were virtues. Anyone who has recently been among Europeans can tell you that there is an increasing tendency on the old continent to blame the United States for lacking many of the ills which have characterized European history. Our lack of poverty is called "materialism," our lack of political dogma is called "aimlessness" and "confusion." On the whole, the people, and especially the intellectuals of Europe, who are desperately on the offensive, have succeeded in convincing us—and especially our intellectuals. They have made us apologize for our wealth and welfare. You will find many well-meaning Americans abroad who think that they are defending their country when they point out that people in the United States are really a lot worse off than Europeans think. They have made us apologize for our lack of philosophical clarity, so that we seek to concoct a political philosophy which can rival the dogmas of Europe.

It has been too long since we have stood on the special virtues of our life and our continent. Over a century has passed since Emerson declared in his "American Scholar": "Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests." But we still see ourselves in the distorting mirror of Europe.

The image which Europe shows us is as much a defense of itself as a caricature of us. We are too easily persuaded that the cancers of European life (and especially of European political life) are healthy growths and that we are deformed for not possessing them. The equations of poverty and idealism, of monopoly and responsibility, of aristocracy and culture, of political dogma and purposeful political institutions, are too readily accepted. It is, of course, some solace to a declining

European culture—a culture dying of poverty, monopoly, aristocracy, and ideology—to think that their ills are simply the excess of their virtues, that theirs must be the virtues of all cultures, and hence that the accidents of history which may have immunized us against such vices also sterilize our culture and doom us to philistinism and vagrancy.

There is no denying that our intellectuals and, most of all, our academics, being the most cosmopolitan part of our culture, have been especially susceptible to the well-meaning advice of our sick friends in Europe.

We have, in a word, been too easily led to deny our peculiarly American virtues in order to seem to have the peculiar European vices. Moreover, our intellectuals, who rightly consider themselves the critical organ of our community, have been much too sensitive to any charge of chauvinism. Hence they, too, have been readier to tell us what we lack than to help us discover what we have. Our historians and political scientists, while blaming themselves and one another for “irresponsibility,” have failed to help us discover the peculiar virtues of our situation. They have left the discovery and defense of those virtues to the dubious efforts of professional patriots.

Is it any wonder that the very word “patriotism” should come to be suspect among intellectuals? Is it any wonder that we suffer from cultural hypochondria?

#### THE CURE FOR OUR HYPOCHONDRIA

The cure for our hypochondria is surely not chauvinism. That simply adds one real ill to the many unreal ills of which we already accuse ourselves. Waving a flag cannot cure inner uncertainty. One possibility, at least a little more fruitful, is to try to discover the peculiar virtues of our situation, the special character of our history: to try to judge ourselves by the poten-

tialities of our own peculiar and magnificent continent. We may then discover that our virtues, like our ills, are actually peculiar to ourselves; that what seem to be inadequacies of our culture, if measured by European standards, are nothing but our differences and may even be virtues.

We are sure to lose the intellectual struggle if we accept the terms of the debate as posed by Russia and by Europe; if we try to show that we are a new and more perfect embodiment of the European ideal of political institutions and culture. That we certainly are not. The European concept of a political community is of a group oriented toward fulfilling an explicit philosophy; political life there is the world of ends and absolutes.

The European concept of culture is basically aristocratic; its great successes—especially in countries like Italy and France—are in the aristocratic arts. Its literature is for the few; its newspapers are subsidized by political parties; its books, when successful, have a circulation a fifth of that in America, even in proportion to the population. European culture, most of it at least, is the heritage of a preliberal past. For all their magnificence, the monuments of that past are products of a culture with which we, fortunately, are in no position to compete. It is surely no accident that we have accomplished relatively little in the arts of painting, sculpture, palace and church architecture, chamber music, and chamber poetry. It is equally no accident that we have contributed so little in political philosophy.

Some Americans, however—and they are probably increasing in number—make the un-American demand for a philosophy of democracy. They believe that this philosophy will be a weapon against Russia and a prop for our own institutions. They are afraid that, without some such salable commodity,

they may not be able to compete with Russia in the world market.

These people are puzzled that we should have come as far as we have without knowing the philosophy which lies beneath our institutions. They are even frightened at what they might find—or fail to find—when they open the *sanctum sanctorum* of national belief. It is these who are among our most dangerous friends; for, even if they should find the Holy of Holies empty, they would refuse to admit it. Instead of trying to discover the reasons why we have managed to be free of idolatry, they will make their own graven image, their own ass's head, and say that is what belonged in the temple all the time. These people are dangerous because they would misrepresent us abroad and corrupt us at home.

If we have no exportable political theory, then can we export our political institutions? Should we try to induce the Italian or the German people to become democratic in the American image? If my thesis is correct, the answer here too is, of course, No. The answer is No, not merely because the attempt to distill our philosophy or to transplant our institutions is apt to fail. It is No because the principles on which we approach politics and have succeeded in building our own institutions deny such a possibility.

If we have learned anything from our history, it is the wisdom of allowing institutions to develop according to the needs of each particular environment; and the value of both environmentalism and traditionalism as principles of political life, as ways of saving ourselves from the imbecilities, the vagaries, and the cosmic enthusiasms of individual men. This is our idea of constitutional federalism, without which our great union would have been impossible.

If what has held us together as a nation has been no explicit political theory held in common but rather a fact of life (what

Whitman properly called "adhesiveness"), how can we expect to bind other nations by theories? We have felt both "individualism which isolates" and, as he says, "adhesiveness or love, that fuses, ties, and aggregates."

We have traditionally held out to the world, not our doctrine, but our example. The idea of America as the last, best hope of mankind has not been the idea that America would outdo other ages and places with its philosophy. It was life, and not thought, which would excel here. This has perhaps taken some of the sting of arrogance out of our consciousness of destiny. For men are in the habit of claiming more personal credit for the quality of their thought than for the quality of their institutions. Even to the most obtuse, institutions seem the product of many forces. In the past we have wanted to be judged not by what we could *tell* the world but by what we could *show* the world. Moreover, we have considered ourselves not a factory of institutions but a laboratory, an experiment. By showing what man might do under our new circumstances, we might give men everywhere new hope for improving their lot *after their own fashion*.

To tell people what institutions they must have, whether we tell them with the Voice of America or with the Money of America, is the thorough denial of our American heritage. It would be an attempt "to meet the monolithic East by attempting to set up a monolithic West." As Stephen Spender has observed: "When the Communists today congratulate themselves on being 'monolithic,' they are congratulating themselves on being dead: and it is for us to see that they do not turn the whole world into their cemetery." An imposed democracy expresses a corroding cynicism. And democratic institutions, however much they may rest on pessimism, must be the opposite of cynical. Tyrannies—fascism, nazism, communism—can impose themselves on others with no hypocrisy, for



they rest unashamedly on force. But if we were to become cynical in order to make Europe seem to stand for something better than it might on its own, we would risk losing everything, even if we should win.

Is it not even possible that the people of Europe will be more willing to defend themselves if it is their own institutions they are defending? If they are unwilling to defend their own, they surely will not want to defend ours.

We have, of course, our modern abolitionists, those who believe that the abolition of slavery in Russia is the sole issue in the world. They surely need no philosophy. The clarity and righteousness of their objective is enough. Soviet communism provides them the sense of "givenness," of obviousness in their objective. For them, Communists embody the spirit of Satan as vividly as the American Indians did for the first Puritans, or as the southern slaveowners did for fire-eaters like Phillips and Garrison. Some of them would seem almost as willing as Garrison to burn the Constitution in order to attain their admirable objective.

There are others who take a more practical Lincolnian view. Like Lincoln, these people hate slavery anywhere, but they doubt their capacity to make a perfect world. Their main concern is to preserve and improve free institutions where they now exist.

If the Lincolnian view involves us in the seeming contradiction of defending our institutions without insisting on propagating them, this is nothing but the contradiction within the idea of freedom itself, which affirms a value but asserts it only to allow a competition among values. We must refuse to become crusaders for liberalism, in order to remain liberals. We must refuse to try to export our commodity. We must refuse to become crusaders for conservatism, in order to conserve the institutions and the genius which have made America great.

# After Betsy, What?



Must a "work of art" be man-made?  
And what is a "work of art" anyway?  
An art historian provides  
some interesting answers.

By H. W. JANSON

*"L'art est fait pour troubler, la science rassure."*

—GEORGES BRAQUE, *Cahier*, 1917–1947

A few years ago the Baltimore News Post ran three pictures side by side, challenging the reader to identify them correctly: one showed an abstract painting recently acquired by the Baltimore Museum, another was the work of a six-year-old child, and the third had been produced by Betsy, a chimpanzee of the same age in the Baltimore Zoo.

Two months later Betsy's discoverer and sponsor, the director of the Zoo, put a group of her paintings on public display, and a number of them were sold for amounts adding up to a significant fraction of the cost of a mate for the talented young female. At this point the story was picked up by the wire services; it became, for a moment, national front-page news—both the *New York Times* and the *Herald-Tribune* carried it—and even *Pravda* printed an account of it, suitably embroidered to illustrate the degeneracy of bourgeois art (it claimed that American museums had been eager to acquire these simian scrawlings).

Conservatives on our side of the Iron Curtain must have had similar thoughts. Was not Betsy the ultimate weapon in

a campaign they had been waging for the past hundred years against the "incompetence" of modern art? Their endlessly repeated contention that "any savage (or any child) can do better than that" could now be amended to include a reference to the infrahuman primates. For them the advent of Betsy was thus neither unexpected nor unwelcome. It is the rest of us, unable to share these certitudes and I-told-you-so's, that have found Betsy a real challenge. One critic, who spoke on "The Age of the Chimpanzee" at the 1957 convention of the American Federation of Art, confessed that he saw no clear-cut way to distinguish Betsy's work from Abstract Expressionism, the dominant trend in present-day painting. Both, he pointed out, could be described in the same terms: highly uncommunicative, uncritical, personal, spontaneous, exploiting chance effects, emphasizing the act of painting as an end in itself and thus rejecting all references to the outside world. Is this not, he asked, a deplorable narrowing and impoverishment? "Doesn't the world need the painter's praise any more?"

Others, we may be sure, have been similarly troubled. And not without cause; for the resemblance of Betsy's work to Abstract Expressionism is too real to be disregarded, whatever the conclusions one may want to draw from it. Nor can we deny that at least some of Betsy's products have a measure of aesthetic appeal to the unprejudiced beholder. There is indeed no clear-cut way to tell the two apart in every instance. It might even be said that Betsy epitomizes the qualities that differentiate the Abstract Expressionists from the painters of the past (including such "old masters" as Picasso).

Betsy has thus had a shock effect not unlike that of *Sputnik I*. These two shakers of confidence, appearing both within the same year, have become symbolic of our doubts and misgivings in their respective spheres. How lasting an impact Betsy will have is difficult to say, but she has in any event raised some

fundamental questions about the aims of the avant-garde of modern painting. Surely the fact that her work—rightly or wrongly—has made serious people think of Abstract Expressionism (or *tachisme*, the French term for the same phenomenon) demands further exploration. Does it really mean that these painters are in danger of descending to an inhuman level? Or could it be that apes are more human than we think? Neither possibility can be dismissed out of hand; men, after all, are not immune to behaving like brutes, while chimpanzees, thanks to the researches of Köhler, Yerkes, and others, are known to possess surprisingly near-human mental capacities.

Our first problem, then, is how to classify Betsy's efforts. Can they be termed works of art properly speaking? If not, what are they, and what is their relation to Abstract Expressionism? The question is less simple than it may seem, for no one fully knows what a work of art is, so that we have no uncontested generic definition to help us in a borderline case such as this. Perhaps it would be well to note in passing that our difficulty is not unique; biologists and biochemists find it equally troublesome to define a living organism as against dead matter. Still, on the basis of our pre-Betsy experience we can venture a few generalizations: thus, while we habitually use the word "beauty" for both, a work of art must not be confused with a work of nature (except insofar as the latter term might be said to include all the works of man). We must, I believe, insist that the making of works of art is an exclusively human activity—indeed, a basic human activity, since we know of no human society totally unproductive in this respect.

But if works of art properly-so-called must be man-made, is it not obvious that Betsy's canvases can at best claim to be the poor relations of true works of art? The difficulty here lies in what we mean by "man-made." Do we (at least so far as the fine arts are concerned) necessarily mean "made by human

hands" in the direct, physical sense? Is the actual shaping of materials an essential part of the creative act?

Our ideas on this subject have undergone some startling changes in the course of time. The Greeks, who were the first to give any thought to the problem, regarded manual work of any kind as base and menial; understandably enough, therefore, they tended to view the artist's mental activity as something quite separate and of far higher rank than the work of his hands. The visible, material work of art was to them merely an imperfect echo of the invisible "original" in the artist's head. According to this view (which is not entirely extinct even today) the physical act of making the work of art is a sort of mechanical projection, a "carrying-out," of a design fully shaped in the mind. Hence the fine arts were classed among the mechanical arts, or crafts, unfit for free men, rather than among the liberal arts; and mechanical arts they remained until the end of the Middle Ages.

Hence also the ancients had no reverence for the physical uniqueness of an artist's handiwork; a conscientious copy could easily replace the original, since the original itself was regarded as a "copy." Modern archeologists are constantly struggling with the problem of originals versus copies in Greek and Roman sculpture for that reason, and the persistence of this attitude is attested by the continuing demand for copies of famous paintings or plaster casts of famous statues until far into the nineteenth century.

Today such copies and casts are out of vogue; we realize that an original loses its essential qualities in the process of being duplicated. But our awareness of the unique value of the original work of art is no sudden development. Its beginnings can be traced back some five hundred years, to the early Renaissance. There we encounter the earliest evidence that works of art were coming to be valued as embodiments of the artist's

individual style; and, since this style was as personal as a signature, it could be seen only in works that were autographic, that is, originals. The new attitude gradually gave rise to a special appreciation of tentative, unfinished, and fragmentary works such as drawings and sketches, executed in a direct and spontaneous way that retained the full flavor of the author's "handwriting." Thus the physical making of the work of art achieved a new dignity and significance; the artist's hand was now viewed as a kind of seismographic needle recording every impulse of his mind. Liberated from the impersonal standards of craftsmanship, the fine arts at last joined the select company of the liberal arts.

It was not until about a century ago, however, that the new attitude finally won out over the older one. Impressionism was the first movement in art whose very name proclaimed the victory of the sketch over the finished picture, of the How over the What, of Becoming over Being, of immediacy and spontaneity over deliberation. Yet the Impressionists and their successors—Fauves, Expressionists, Cubists—remained traditional in one respect; they still produced "likenesses," however tenuous their link with external reality. And to the extent that their aim was representational, their way of painting, "free" though it might be, retained an element of purposiveness, of method, of technical discipline.

Since then, we have had ample evidence that neither representation nor manual skill are essential to the creative process in the visual arts. In 1913 Braque and Picasso began to produce *papiers collés* and similar constructions of cut and pasted pieces of paper, bits of wood or other scraps of their material environment. The aesthetic importance of these objects is in no way diminished by the fact that the choice of ingredients was often accidental and that the act of assembling them demanded only the most elementary kind of manual dexterity. At the best such



Courtesy The Baltimore Museum of Art

*Abstract expressionistic work,  
"Backyard on Tenth Street,"  
by Willem de Kooning*

collages, although childishly simple in the technical sense, are masterpieces of controlled design. The Dadaists took over the invention itself but revolted against its formal severity; instead of cutting paper they preferred to tear it and to arrange the



pieces "according to the laws of chance," so that not only the choice of materials but their shape and configuration as well were freed from premeditated control. The making of a work of art thus became "a lucky accident," and the artist's creative act was to make it possible for the accident to happen and to recognize it when it did. The *objets trouvés* ("found objects") of Marcel Duchamp were the ultimate expression of this attitude: mass-produced everyday objects of our industrial civilization which he displayed, rechristened with intriguing titles, in Dadaist exhibitions. Clearly, these were his creations, even though he had not physically made them; he merely "found" them and communicated this discovery to the beholder by removing them from their customary setting and placing them on exhibit, with a label to point out their new identity.

Here, then, we have the quintessential work of art—an act of the imagination made visible in a manner so simple and direct as to dispense with the trained hand entirely. After all, the one physical act involved in the "making" of an *objet trouvé*, the removal of the object from its non-aesthetic habitat, need not be performed by the artist himself.

If we acknowledge *objets trouvés* as authentic works of art—and I believe we must, however limited we may think their scope—then we shall have to extend the same recognition to Betsy's efforts; for they, too, are "man-made" even though painted by infrahuman hands. Köhler tells of a chimpanzee who had watched a man painting a wooden pole white and then, left alone with the brush and pot of paint, neatly painted a large stone. Betsy, we must assume, had no such specific model to imitate; she was merely supplied with paint and canvas and shown that these could be brought together. Doubtless she enjoyed making paint tracks with her fingers (and not only on the canvas, we may be sure). But was she watching for a "lucky accident" in the process? Did she sud-

denly stop and put aside a canvas because she liked what she saw and wanted it to stay that way? I rather suspect she stopped only when the game began to bore her; it was her keeper that watched for the "lucky accident" and snatched the canvas away from her at the strategic moment.

And what determines the strategic moment? That depends on the keeper's expectations. If he responds only to realistic likenesses, he may well have to wait forever, since everything Betsy does will seem chaotic to him. If, on the other hand, he has some familiarity with Abstract Expressionism, he is likely to see "snatch-worthy" accidents at fairly frequent intervals. These may even have some genuine aesthetic appeal, but if they do the credit must go to the snatcher, since it was his imagination that recognized the "lucky accident" and caused him to remove it from Betsy's clutches. Betsy herself is merely a source of random patterns, more manageable perhaps and capable of a greater variety of movements than the proverbial donkey's tail with a brush tied to it but essentially of the same order. Had her paintings been produced by a less anthropomorphic agent, they would in all likelihood have created much less of a stir. As it is, we have all been taken in to some extent by her performance, which through no fault of hers has become an object lesson in artistic gamesmanship ("how to give the appearance of painting a picture without actually doing so").

But Betsy was predestined to become a symbolic figure for another reason as well. Ever since the Middle Ages, it has been said that "art is the ape of nature," and the phrase has been cast in visual form countless times, so that the image of the ape as a painter is a thoroughly familiar one in Western art. Needless to say, these painting apes are for the most part either pedantic realists or superficial imitators of other (and greater) masters. Not until the mid-nineteenth century could the satire



*Satire on the  
romantic school of painting,  
from "Un autre monde,"  
1850, by Grandville.*

be reversed: the witty drawing by Grandville shows Delacroix and his fellow Romantics wielding the brush with an uncritical abandon that strikes us as oddly prophetic of Betsy's behavior. The photographs of Betsy at the easel thus offer the startling spectacle of an allegory come alive. Even so, her paintings are



*Detail from "St. Sebastian,"  
about 1460, by Andrea Mantegna.*

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

not a valid argument against Abstract Expressionism; they are merely its by-products. We are, of course, free to reject the entire "accident-prone" aesthetic of which Betsy's work offers an extreme example, but we cannot legitimately do so on the ground that it is not art.

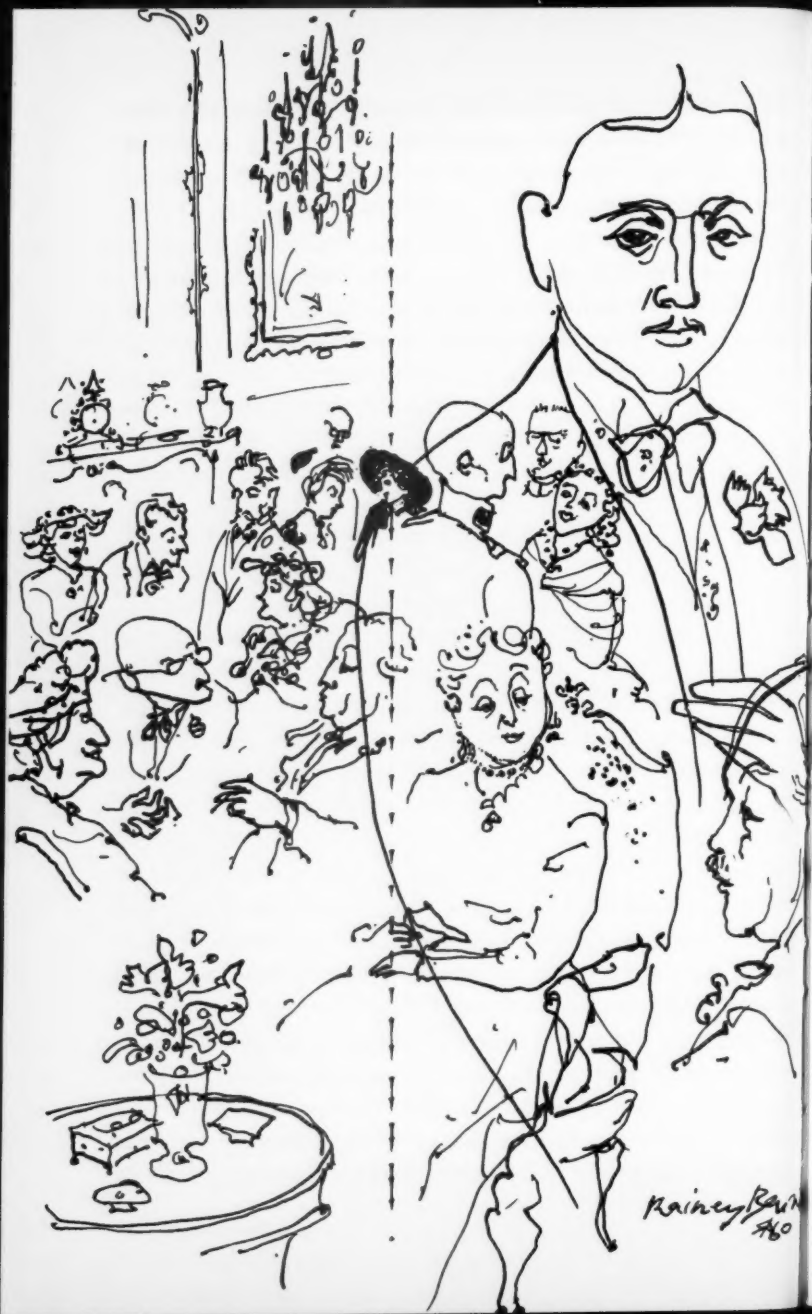
Abstract Expressionism itself, however revolutionary it may seem, is only the most recent stage of a development that has deep historic roots. The exploitation of the accidental is an essential aspect of all art, whether the artist takes advantage of chance formations in nature (as he did on the walls of caves in the Old Stone Age) or causes his own "accidents" on canvas. There is an element of the unexpected, of chance discovery, even in the most deliberate and controlled artistic effort, although it may be so thoroughly hidden by formal convention that its presence can only be surmised.

What distinguishes the artist of today in this respect is, on the one hand, his comparative freedom from formal conventions (they are not wholly lacking even now, and probably never will be) and, on the other, a far greater awareness of the "creative accident." If we look for the beginnings of this characteristically modern attitude, we find them at the same point where we encounter the earliest concern with the physical uniqueness of the work of art: in the early Renaissance. Thus Leone Battista Alberti explains the origin of sculpture on the basis of tree-trunks and clumps of earth having a chance resemblance to living forms, and Leonardo da Vinci describes our proneness to find images in clouds or cracking plaster. These passages were probably inspired by similar references among ancient authors; but early Renaissance artists, unlike the ancients, dared on occasion to make conscious use of chance images. Such at least is the conclusion forced upon us by the odd little horseman shown on the left, from the *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* by Andrea Mantegna in the Vi-

enna Museum. The figure occupies a tiny area (about 1½ inches square) in the upper left-hand corner of a panel two feet tall. That it is indeed an "accident" made explicit is indicated by the fact that its shape is only partly realized and that it has the color and texture of the cloud within which it is confined, so that the vast majority of beholders fail to notice its existence. Nor can it be explained on the basis of pictorial tradition, since there are no analogies to it in other paintings of the period. And no one has yet discovered a symbolic or narrative significance that might account for it as a rationally planned part of the composition. To all appearances, then, Mantegna discovered the figure in the process of painting the cloud, and became so fascinated with it that he not only let it stand but elaborated upon it a bit, thereby permitting us to share his pleasure in this irrational accident.

The path from Mantegna's diminutive burst of spontaneity to the complex chains of pictorial "accidents" in present-day art covers a span of five hundred years—the same five hundred years that encompass the growth of modern science. The two developments are, I believe, intimately linked to each other, even though they proceed along separate tracks. There are, to be sure, points of direct contact and cross-fertilization, but these generally lie along the periphery of either field, rather than at the center. Perhaps their relationship can be most aptly described in terms of the two faces of the same coin, the body of the coin, the substance common to both art and science, being the modern mind in its various stages of evolution since the fifteenth century. Did not the same impulse that brought about an awareness of the unique individuality of personal artistic style also encourage individual reasoning to claim primacy over time-honored belief? The battle against suprapersonal authority, whether of form or of intellectual tradition, could hardly be waged on one front alone; it had to be won or lost on

both together. After all, original discovery in science is no less a feat of the individual imagination—even though a very different kind of feat—than original discovery in art. If, as Braque has observed, the purpose of science is to reassure us (by extending our grasp of the physical world) while that of art is to disturb us (probing the hidden recesses of our consciousness), it is hardly surprising that the capacity-to-disturb of the one should have grown during the past half-century at the same pace as the capacity-to-reassure of the other.





# The Duchess at Sunset

By PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON

A radio play based  
on Proust's characters,  
with an introduction  
by the playwright

**W**E remember the majority of great novels by the people in them. Perhaps it is not for this that we chiefly remember *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*: if we taste the madeleine ourselves, our first involuntary memory is of an atmosphere in which girls were smiling, hawthorns and lilac were in bloom, and obsessional jealousies crumbled away the long and airless hours of the Parisian night. Yet, once the memory starts to work, it is people that emerge: excavated from time past to

exist in the here and now, and for as long as we ourselves shall live. In *Jean Santeuil*, Proust speaks of his characters as moving freely in time and space: it is in both elements that the greatest characters of literature move freely, or may be moved like chessmen upon the board of the reader's imagination.

When it was first suggested to me by Rayner Heppenstall that I should write an "Imaginary Conversation" for the "Third Programme" of the B.B.C. and Proust came into my mind, my first thought was not simply to produce an amusing *pastiche*—though I hoped I might write something that was not dull—but to make a critical point. My intention was to show that Proust's people had been so completely regained from Time that they could continue to exist in any time; that they were so fully created as to be imaginable, in their words and their behavior, in a good many other circumstances.

Obviously, I had to demonstrate this by means of a form of *pastiche*, and in this case a somewhat peculiar form. The program was designed for the English listener and the English reader: it had therefore to be a *pastiche* less of Proust himself than of Scott-Moncrieff. Yet the two are so close, Proust's essence, even his speech rhythms, are so accurately conveyed from French into English that in my own work, as it proceeded, I found reassurance of the miracle the translator had achieved.

In the end, I wrote six programs, not one. In *The Duchess at Sunset* and *Albertine Regained* I may appear to have made fun of a great master; I am not really apologetic about that. I regard Proust as one of the greatest of all writers; when I make fun of him, I do so where he might have made fun of himself, using much the same method as he used himself. For, as well as being one of the greatest of writers, he is in a sense the most modest. His book is not autobiographical; but in his letters to his publisher, Jacques Rivière, he equates

"Marcel" with himself by references to "ma grandmère," "ma brouille avec Gilberte." And "Marcel" constantly makes fun of himself, deplotes himself, turns up his weaknesses like trump cards. Proust is possibly, of all great masters, the most lacking in pomposity; it is for this reason, perhaps, that he attracts so curiously personal an affection from those who know him only through his work. We cannot come so near to men who speak as gods, to Dostoevski, to Dante, to Tolstoi, even to Dickens, as we can come to men who speak as if they may be wrong, they may be mortal.

Among other things, Proust is a great comic writer, in many respects more detached than is generally realized. In others, in his approach to love and to friendship, he is far more subjective. The whole of the Marcel-Albertine story would be intolerable if it were not for the presence, beside the "Marcel" of the story, of another shadowy Marcel, Marcel-Schlemihl, standing apart with a slightly sour, self-mocking grin upon his face. He is the "Marcel" who has moved forward in time, who can look back, not with the detachment of the author, who is only in part the real "moi," but with the detachment of that second personality which maturity grafts upon us all. This Marcel-Schlemihl is noticeably a bit ashamed of himself: and when we are ashamed of our youthful selves we are forced to seek the refuge of finding ourselves funny, if we are not to find ourselves intolerable. We should be fonder of Jean-Jacques Rousseau if he had realized, when writing of his boyhood, that he was writing of a child. We are perhaps attracted to Saint Augustine because he did realize precisely that.

These six programs are meant, then, as a work of empiric criticism, criticism through the dramatic form. In all of them there is character-criticism: and here I must say that only character drawn upon the level of psychological realism, however much it may be heightened by the writer's imagination or idio-

syncrasy, can survive the chessboard treatment. We might take Dmitri Karamazov, Madame de Mortsau, Anna Karenina, Pierre Bezukov, La Sanseverina, Rosamond Lydgate, Mr. Crawley, and put them anywhere we chose in space and time; we could not do the same with Micawber, Quilp, Mrs. Gamp, Karmazinov, Mrs. Proudie, or Mr. Slope, who are really cartoons on the level of journalism, owing their existence to the circumstances of their own time, their own world. Proust's characters continue to exist in our time, in our world. It is not true, in any deep sense, to say that we meet the characters of Dickens everywhere. When we do meet them, we are struck by their bizarreness: we feel they are unique because they do not belong to the moment in which we exist. But Bloch, Françoise, Oriane, Mme. Verdurin, Norpois, Charlus—even he—are still about the world. We may meet them any day, so close are they to ourselves and to our apprehension of other beings, and when we do so we are not particularly surprised. I remember hearing, in a hotel in Brighton, the unmistakable accents of Bloch: and turning to regard the speaker, saw Bloch sitting by the fire, dogmatically explaining to a friend that the Brontës between them wrote only one novel worth the attention of any intelligent person, and that was *The Professor*.

In these programs I have tried to retain a certain mathematical proportion: have tried, for example, to give the subjects of "society," "homosexuality," the same ratios of importance as they have in the novel. The major characters are used in rough proportion to their significance in Proust's work.

#### A NOTE ON *The Duchess at Sunset*

However many facts we may know about the England of Chaucer or Shakespeare, it is hard to imagine it with any real ease or relaxation. To begin with, we do not know what Eng-

lish speech sounded like then. We may think we do, even as we think we might now recognize the speech of Julius Caesar, but we cannot be sure. And so, as we see Hamlet and the Wife of Bath against a blur of heraldic color rather than against a background of sharp realistic detail, we are better able to concentrate more fully upon them as individuals, related not so much to their social framework as to their immediate fellows.

As I noted before, the characters of Dickens are not transferable into the conditions of our direct experience. This is mainly because he was not presenting them on the plane of psychological realism—but there is another difficulty. It is probable that we are still too near to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in England to see its people in relief, that because we can envisage their society fairly clearly, we cannot see them except in relation to it. It happens that Proust's social background, concentrated as he was upon it, did not pin his characters by the feet so much as the social backgrounds of nineteenth-century English writers. Perhaps we know less about his society, in fact, so that it, too, becomes a blur of color; or perhaps it is, above all, his particular power of creating psychological interest; but, whatever the reasons (I believe them to be complex), Albertine, Oriane, Mme. Verdurin, M. de Charlus stand out as individuals very much as Hamlet and the Wife of Bath stand out. My idea, then, was that it would be possible to advance them several squares on the chessboard of Time and show how they might all have behaved in 1941, in the first year of the German occupation of Paris.

This is the only one of the six programs in which I have permitted myself wholly to equate Proust with "Marcel." In the book Marcel is a Gentile; in *The Duchess at Sunset* he is half-Jewish, and this fact determines his reactions to the other characters. He is still in Paris, idle, apprehensive, wondering

what to do next. It is already obvious that the magic doors are being gently but firmly closed against him: for him, the lights are going out all over Paris.

The Duchesse de Guermantes has, of course, accepted the German occupation, but with her customary caution is preserving just a degree of reserve. After all, it is conceivable that the Germans may not be the victors in the long run; there is an outside chance that they may not win the war, and she does not intend to be caught in an impossible position socially should the tide turn against them. She has a genuine affection for Marcel but feels his presence in her house is becoming too dangerous for herself, so she sets M. de Norpois, an unequivocal supporter of Vichy, the task of persuading him to leave the country. To her the Nazis are vulgar and ridiculous, and she would like to see the back of them, but she is taking no further risks. Her nephew Saint-Loup is already in England with De Gaulle. Her old friend Swann, whom she now feels compelled, meekly and sorrowfully, to reject, is there also, broadcasting for the B.B.C. Swann's disreputable wife is in America with her daughter; the absurd Jew Bloch is there too, making a success as a playwright under the *nom de guerre* of Jacques du Rozier. Oriane has a streak of real warm-heartedness and is unwilling to hurt Marcel—indeed, she restrains the Duke, who has fewer scruples. Nevertheless, she gives him delicately to understand that this is the last time her house will be open to him.

He is now in an agony of indecision. He goes to visit Mme. Verdurin. She does not share even the faint dubiety of the Duchess. Her house is full of delightful Germans who are really capable of appreciating art; nothing could be more agreeable or more stimulating. She can inspire them as she has inspired others; has she not reason to believe that she was directly responsible for the writing of *Mein Kampf*? She does not

wish to hear of Bergotte's removal to a concentration camp; when forced to hear of it, she bursts out furiously that he is a traitor to France, since he wishes to see her destroyed by further war. As for Albertine—in this, as in everything else, Marcel can never discover which side she is on. There are rumors that she is in the pay of the Germans: rumors that she is working for the Resistance. Nobody will ever know.

It seemed to me that all the foregoing characters were behaving in accordance with the natures Proust gave them. My real problem was with the Baron de Charlus, and in the end I decided that he was more likely to be found on the anti-Vichy side. The son of a Bavarian duchess, allied to the Hapsburgs, he had appeared Germanophile in the first world war partly through his family loyalties and partly through sheer native counter-suggestibility . . .

"No doubt if he had lived in Germany the German fools defending an unjust cause with passionate folly would equally have irritated him; but living in France, the French fools, defending a just cause with passionate folly, irritated him no less."

Also, he passionately despised what seemed to him the blitherings of Norpois; it struck me that he would have been as instinctively opposed to him in 1941 as in 1916; and could there be any doubt what, in 1941, Norpois' views would have been?

In the war of 1939 the Hapsburgs were finished, and in their place stood a successor for whom the Baron could have felt only contempt, a *petit bourgeois* who had never achieved a higher rank than a corporal's. Moreover, M. de Charlus, despite his maternal ancestry, was predominantly a Frenchman, the glory of France, in its reality and its myth, deeply sunken into his imagination. With the familial allegiance removed, his racial allegiance to Germany must have become negligible.

I felt that there might be, however, other elements guiding his choice of sides. The first, and most important, was his natural bravery. He was a brave man, a man of *panache*: of all the Guermantes, he was the only one without a trace of moral cowardice. The second element may have been the decisive one: he had a fancy for a Gaullist footman.

So I decided that it was reasonable enough, and indeed honorable, to associate M. de Charlus with the Resistance movement. I simply could not see him as a hanger-on of Vichy. I could not see him, in any matter affecting France, as finally inglorious.

So I made him reveal himself to Marcel, in safety, in the open, at night, and allowed him to ask the young man what his own plans were to be. Say that he did go to England; what would he do then?

"Well, sir," says Marcel, "I am meaning to write a book. . . ."

By this phrase I attempted to imply the final intention of my program. I could not hope, I had not the skill, to show Guermantes or Verdurins in their full, magical, raucous, parakeet resplendence; but I could hope to present them as the raw material, ordinary enough by ordinary sunlight, ordinary candlepower, from which Proust drew his great work.

## THE DUCHESS AT SUNSET

NARRATOR: When Marcel Proust wrote *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, he presented the study of an aristocracy in decay. He showed it, at first, overripe and golden, like a peach on a wall catching the first brilliance of the sunset. But below the Guermantes peach was the Verdurin creeper, the predatory vine of Odette and Madame Bontemps; and as the peach tree withered the creeper overgrew it, overcame it, superseded it. By the year 1916, the conquest was complete. And the Baron de



Charlus, blind, senile, riding in his carriage at the Rond Point, contemplated Time Past, and gave the roll-call of the Dead.

CHARLUS: *Hannibal de Bréauté, mort! Antoine de Mouchy, mort! Charles Swann, mort! Adalbert de Montmorency, mort! Baron de Talleyrand, mort! Sosthène de Doudeauville, mort!*

NARRATOR: *Et chaque-fois, ce mot "mort" semblait tomber sur ces défunts comme une pelletée de terre plus lourde, lancée par un fossoyeur qui tenait à les river plus profondément à la tombe.*

But tonight we shall neither grieve for nor rejoice in the fall of the Dukes and Princes of Guermantes. Since "they stand like giants immersed in Time," and we may play with Time as we will, we shall hold them for a while at the peak of their glory and, as if we took the peach in the palm of the hand and bore it merely from one part of the garden to another, shall set them down in the year 1941, in the second year of the German occupation of France.

Madame de Guermantes is still the most fashionable hostess of the Faubourg, M. de Charlus still among the most powerful and arrogant figures of Parisian society. Madame Verdurin is yet mistress of the Little Clan "*le petit noyau*," whipping her lions through their paces. It is still necessary for her to soak her handkerchief in *Rhino-gomenol* before hearing the music of Vinteuil, lest her tears of appreciation induce neuralgia or bronchitis. . . . Marcel, frequenter of both salons, has not yet begun to write seriously, though he has published an article or two in the *Figaro*. It is he who will prepare us for the evening's entertainment. M. Marcel Proust!

MARCEL: It was early May, although now, after eight o'clock, it was still the light of day that, on the Place de la Concorde, was giving the Luxor Obelisk the appearance of being made of pink nougat. The moon rose in the sky like a section of orange delicately peeled, although slightly bruised. But presently she was to be fashioned of the most enduring gold.

Outside the mansion of the Duchesse de Guermantes I paused for a moment or so, wondering if it were very much

too early for me to present myself. I had arrived early because I meant to stay no more than an hour before going on to visit Madame Verdurin, from whom I hoped to learn something of the mystery of Albertine.

But the windows were open wide, and, as I could already hear the voice of Madame de Guermantes raised in laughter above the applauding mirth of others, I judged that she was ready to receive guests.

*(The sound of a party)*

DUCHESSE DE GUER: Oh no, no, Babal! I assure you, it's perfectly true. I'm sure no one can accuse me of inventing it. I haven't the imagination: I'm no Marconi, no Edison. I see, I hear, I record. I may be the Recording Angel, but I'm not the daughter of Necessity.

DUC DE GUER: Yes, Babal, I think you may accept that. Oriane never creates, she interprets.

DUCHESSE DE GUER: Besides, I had it from M. Abetz!

MME DE VILLEPARIS: What was that, Oriane? I didn't quite catch.

DUCHESSE DE GUER: Now, my dear aunt, you know I hate to repeat a joke. You make me do it on purpose, just to make a fool of me.

MME DE VILLE: You're most unfair! And I insist on hearing the joke!

DUCHESSE DE GUER: It's not even a very good one. It was simply that someone asked Herr Goering if it were true that he had a favourite Jew, and he replied, "Why, yes, Ahasuerus! The Wandering One. I can always be sure of him moving on somewhere else."

BRÉAUTÉ: There you are, madame!

MME DE VILLE: H'm. Not much, but it will do.

DUC DE GUER: 'Pon my word, Oriane, you mustn't tell stories like that when our young friend turns up!

BRÉAUTÉ: Which young friend is that?

DUCHESSE DE GUER: Monsieur Proust.

BRÉAUTÉ (meaningfully): Oh.

duc de guer: Yes, Bréauté, you may well say 'Oh'. I often say to Oriane, ought we still to invite him here?—In these days, I mean, when you consider that perhaps his ancestry is not precisely what they call "Aryan". . . .

duchesse de guer: Now, Basin, if the skies fall on me, if they take me and put me in chains, I shall continue to maintain that a man is not *wholly* responsible for his ancestors! Besides I am fond of Marcel. He is very nice. And whatever my defects, I am not altogether without loyalty—

duc de guer: That's all very well, Oriane, but—

ducesse de guer: Nor without influence—an absurd little particle, perhaps, but still . . . influence. I don't intend to let them hurt my little Marcel, while I've still got breath to put in a word in the right quarters. What says my aunt Villeparis?

mme de ville: I was very attached to his dear grandmother. I should hate to think of any harm befalling him. But why doesn't he go to England? Or to America?

duchesse de guer: To America, like that poor Bloch! I hear his play is most successful on Broadway. But he doesn't call himself Bloch now. He calls himself—(Overcome by laughter) No, I can't!

duc de guer: Come on, my dear; we're all waiting.

duchesse de guer: Jacques du Rozier!

mme de ville: Oh no, no! That boor!

duc de guer: Now we shall have all the Cohens and Israels calling themselves Courvoisiers, or La Trémoilles—

bréauté: Or Guermantes, my dear Dut-yess. Not a soul will be safe.

duchesse de guer: Heaven forbid. But I wish him no harm. I wish harm to no human being—Oh, it's true!

duc de guer: . . . You may laugh, both of you, but it's true. Oriane may have a tongue like a scorpion, but at heart she's as simple and sentimental as a peasant.

BRÉAUTÉ: Good grate-ious, my dear Basin, as if any of us would ever doubt it!

MME DE VILLE: I remember M. Bloch. Once, when I was un-wise enough to invite him to my "Day," he had the impertinence to open a window without my permission. I think we taught him a lesson.

DUCHESSE DE GUER: But you're glad he's spared the fate of Bergotte?

DUC DE GUER: Of Bergotte? Nonsense. Foreign propaganda. I'll bet my boots the fellow got away.

BRÉAUTÉ: No. They took him to a camp in Germany. It seems that the gentleman had gone too far at last.

DUC DE GUER: Well, I say Master Bergotte asked for it, trying to make trouble, stirring things up again just when they were beginning to go smoothly. Besides, the camps aren't so bad as they say. It's propaganda, the lot of it.

DUCHESSE DE GUER: You may be right. All the same I do wish—for everyone's sake, I might add—that my little Marcel—

BRÉAUTÉ: (Mutter) Here he is.

DUC DE GUER: (Mutter) Talk of the devil!

FOOTMAN: (Announcing) M. Marcel Proust!

MARCEL: (*Narrating*) I had, in fact, delayed for some minutes my entry into the Hotel de Guermantes, my attention having been distracted by the spectacle of M. de Charlus, who, at the far side of the courtyard, was engrossed in conversation with the youngest of the Duchess' footmen. This conversation was being conducted with an air so surreptitious, and at the same time so solemn, that I was half-expecting it to terminate in some kind of dramatic action, just as we half-expect that the two figures conferring at the foot of the horrible bed, in that painting by James Pryde which is called "The Grave," will suddenly turn upon each other or, which would be more monstrous, upon the spectator.

As, however, neither the footman nor M. de Charlus appeared likely to make any sudden assault upon each other or upon my

own person, I withdrew my gaze reluctantly and went upstairs to present myself to the Duchess.

Madame de Guermantes greeted me with a comradely heartiness designed to avert my attention from the fact (which I had not then perceived, but which became apparent in a moment or so) that her husband was by no means happy about my presence in his house, and that I had been invited upon this occasion, not to the usual "crush," but to a very small party of intimates gathered together with all the nervous bonhomie of Early Christians, to make a show of faith which, upon this occasion, was to be an expression of faith in myself. Everyone invited was "safe," none likely to reveal the secrets of the confessional.

The fact that Oriane continued to receive me was due, I have no doubt, to a desire to prove herself gallant in the face of danger, to give the appearance of flying, with all her loyalties erect like an aigrette of Paradise plumes upon her rosy and marvellous brow, in the face of the Nazis; yet there was, in all this, some genuine regard for myself, something really noble and untainted by moral vanity.

M. de Bréauté, sniffing at me like a wild boor, showed an uncommon concern for my health. There was, he said, in the mountains of Northern Carolina, a wonderful new clinic for the treatment of asthma, and he insisted, there and then, upon forcing the address upon me.

Madame de Villeparis, having asked me why I no longer came to her "Days" and, satisfied that I had no real intention of renewing the habit, told me to be sure to appear without fail on the following Friday; after which she sat down at a little table to play Patience, at which pastime she was assisted by the subtle advice, the omnipotent forefinger, of M. de Bréauté.

I informed Madame de Guermantes that the reason for my early arrival was the necessity of an early departure.

DUCHESSE DE GUER: Basin, do you hear that?

BASIN: M'm?

DUCHESSE DE GUER: I told you what would happen; he's defying the curfew and deserting us for Countess Molé! Isn't that so, M. Proust? Be a man, now. We can all endure the truth, no matter how stern it may be.

MARCEL: Well, I—

DUC DE GUER: What a woman you are, Oriane! Let the man have his secrets. Anyway, you know perfectly well why he's leaving us in the lurch. When he leaves here, he will go straight back, like a good boy, to his charming cousin of whom we've heard so much.

MARCEL: I assure you, sir, I—

DUCHESSE DE GUER: There, Basin, he assures you! I knew I was right. Ain't I right, Monsieur? La Molé has lured you to her enormous crush; and you're going to desert our humble little picnic for her saturnalia—or rather, it's something between a saturnalia and a cattle show, full of huge, graminivorous creatures with vine leaves on their horns, all bumping and boring and mooing for their fodder. And it will be terrible fodder, you may take my word for it. Last time we were there she served a Savarin soaked in paraffin—at least I think it was paraffin; at any rate, it was some kind of volatile spirit. Basin calls her "La Pétroleuse"...

(The door opens)

FOOTMAN: M. le Baron de Charlus!

CHARLUS: Evening, Oriane. Evening, Basin. Evening, Bréauté.

DUC DE GUER: } Evening, Mémé.

BRÉAUTÉ: } Good evening, Mémé.

MARCEL: } Good evening, sir.

DUCHESSE DE GUER: Palamède! You're early, too! I'm so glad. If you hadn't been you'd have missed our friend here, who is in such a hurry to go to Madame Molé's that he won't even take the chair Basin's forcing into the backs of his knees.

CHARLUS: Is that true, Monsieur? Can I believe my ears? Is it possible that you have so little regard for my veto that you can sidle away into the sewers without even a clothes peg on your

nose—unless you have the article already in your pocket?—sidle away to rollick in the cesspool?

MARCEL: I give you my word, sir, I am not going to Madame Molé's this evening.

CHARLUS: You set my mind at rest. In any case, her house reeks with the Boche. There's so much heel-clicking that people take it for a typewriting bureau.

DUC DE GUER: (*Lowering his voice*) Listen, Mémé, we're all friends here, but—

DUCHESSE DE GUER: Yes, Mémé, you really must be careful. We all know you don't mean what you say, that your heart is with us, but all the same—

DUC DE GUER: Oriane means, we are already sufficiently compromised. Herr Abetz said to me himself, when he found out that Robert had joined De Gaulle in England—

MARCEL: Saint-Loup? With De Gaulle?

DUC DE GUER: Yes, the young idiot, fighting for lost causes without a moment's concern for his family. Châtellerault's gone, too, which is even more extraordinary, since he's the last person one would have supposed. And with Swann over there as well, haranguing us nightly from the B.B.C.—

DUCHESSE DE GUER: I adored poor Charles. I never dreamed he would be so ungrateful.

MARCEL: Is Madame Swann with him?

DUCHESSE DE GUER: Why, no! She and her daughter went to England first, but then they ran away to America. They didn't like the air-raids. What a delicious colony there must be in New York! The Swanns, mother and daughter, and our good Rozier-Bloch—

DUC DE GUER: Don't chatter, Oriane! I want to talk to Mémé. Mémé, Herr Abetz gave me the hint, when he told me about Robert, that it would be as well for us to be discreet . . . he didn't put it quite like that, but I understood. A nod is as good as a wink, eh? So you must watch that tongue of yours, or piff! We'll be in irons, the lot of us.

CHARLUS: You say we are all friends here?

DUC DE GUER: Naturally. All the same—

CHARLUS: Then in this company I am not, I take it, required to admire the Corporal? In the last war the German soldier was magnificent, and a German dragoon the most Phidean creature imaginable. For the Emperor William I had the most profound respect, which I did not, like some persons darting under the tricolor like crabs under a rock, attempt to deny. I do not now refuse to admit our defeat; but I am not personally attracted toward the new master of Europe. The conquerors are degenerating. First it was Alexander; yesterday Napoleon, today Herr Hitler. Tomorrow, Heaven help us, it will be the sanitary orderly!

DUC DE GUER: I am only telling you that Abetz suggested we should watch our step. . . .

MARCEL: (*Narrating*) At this point Madame de Villeparis came to join us, but for the moment said nothing, only moving her anxious eyes from Madame de Guermentes' face to my own and slowly back again, in a fixed hypnotic stare that seemed to require the Duchess to remember my presence, and consider well my potentialities as a bringer of disaster.

DUCHESSE DE GUER: . . . I don't believe it. At any rate, Basin, I don't see how we can be expected to take responsibility for our former friends. What have we to do with Swann?

DUC DE GUER: So far as Swann's concerned, his conduct towards ourselves has been beyond words. Yes, after the friendship we have shown him he ought to have remained loyal to France and to the Marshal. For you can ask Oriane—she had a real friendship for him—

DUCHESSE DE GUER: It is quite true. I have no reason to conceal the fact that I did feel a sincere affection for Charles!

DUC DE GUER: There, you see, I don't have to make her say it. And after that, he carries his ingratitude to the point of becoming a Gaullist!



MME DE VILLE: I feel that one might have expected anything from Swann since he made that low marriage. Any mésalliance is destructive. It was bad enough when the House of France married into the Medicis.

CHARLUS: But all this can't be amusing to our young friend here. Eh, Monsieur Proust? Let us hear from you how you regard the present situation.

DUCHESSE DE GUER: Yes, Marcel. After all, you must have quite an original viewpoint—I mean—well, original!

MARCEL: Well, sir, with regard to Swann—

CHARLUS: What's all this about Swann? We weren't talking about Swann. What is your attitude to Herr Hitler and his friends, who occupy us, and occupy themselves so much with us?

MARCEL: Why, sir, I—

DUC DE GUER: Now, Mémé, leave the chap in peace! No politics here. This is Liberty Hall. That is. . . . Well, we can't perhaps expect our young friend here to see the situation in quite the same light as ourselves. And we don't want him in any doubt about your own feelings, eh?

MARCEL: After the news we have of Bergotte, Monsieur, I find my own position difficult.

DUC DE GUER: Bergotte? Bergotte? The concentration camp business? Nonsense, my boy! You've been listening to foreign broadcasts, and if you do that you may find yourself in someone's bad books. And anyway, as I was saying to Oriane, if Master Bergotte hadn't set out to be a troublemaker, all he'd get if he were in a concentration camp—which I don't admit, mind!—would be a little wholesome discipline.

BRÉAUTÉ: Which it is possible, my dear Dut'yess, that France needs as a nation.

DUC DE GUER: (*Taking up Bréauté without pause*) Precisely! Babal, you are right. If we toe the line now, we'll reap the benefit later. Mark my words, the Germans aren't bad fellows; they've points to give us all, in some respect. You can't say they haven't been correct—

DUCHESSE DE GUER: Oh, entirely! You must admit, Marcel, that their nice little frowns and charming little bows, just as if someone had put a penny in the slot—

DUC DE GUER: (*Furious*) Oriane!—The governor of Paris, for instance, isn't a bad chap. They've got to be on the harsh side now—that's the rules of war; but, as they stiffen us up, so we shall civilize them, and in ten years from now France will be a world power again.

BRÉAUTÉ: Oh, in less!

CHARLUS: Stiffen us?

DUCHESSE DE GUER: How extremely odd it will seem to be Correct!

(*Door opens*)

FOOTMAN: Monsieur le Marquis de Norpois!

DUC DE GUER: There! That's the man to give us the facts, he'll have his finger on the pulse, all right. We'll ask him what he thinks about it. . . .

MARCEL: (*Narrating*) Feeling in no mood to hear the Ambassador's reply to the question M. de Guermantes intended to put to him, I moved away from the circle, and finding my withdrawal unremarked went to look at some new paintings by Elstir recently acquired by the Duchess. The time passed so swiftly that I was amazed, on looking at my watch, to find the hour hand pointing to ten instead of to nine o'clock, as if the little golden needle, loosened by necromancy, had slipped from one figure to the next at the half turn of my wrist. The curfew was particularly erratic that month. There had been one notable day when it was at two o'clock in the afternoon.

I hastened downstairs to make my farewells. Madame de Guermantes, feeling that perhaps these had been accepted by her husband with rather too relieved a heartiness, urged me to return for a little while if my other appointment should not keep me too late. . . .

DUCHESSE DE GUER: . . . The others will be gone by then, and Basin and I will be alone by our own hearth. It's nicer like that, don't you think? We don't keep early hours except when we're in the country, and we shall look forward to having a really cosy chat. By the way, you haven't taken Palamède's nonsense to heart? He's as loyal to the Marshal as the rest of us, but he liked pretending he's different. I tell him, "If you go on like this, we shall begin to believe you're a Gaullist."

MARCEL: (*Narrating*) Assuring Madame de Guermantes that I should take nothing to heart (by which I meant that she could trust my tongue) I promised to return to her house if this were at all possible, and ran in search of a cab. I was waiting on the pavement when M. Charlus suddenly appeared at my elbow. He asked me abruptly if I were by any chance going to Madame Verdurin's, and, upon hearing my reply, said he would see me there later.

CHARLUS: You will not leave before I arrive. I have something to say to you.

MARCEL: Won't you go with me now, sir?

CHARLUS: No, I shall be occupied for an hour, perhaps more. Wait for me, mind: do you hear me? . . .

MARCEL: (*Narrating*) I told him that I had heard, that I would wait; and hailing my cab directed the driver to Madame Verdurin's house on the Quai Conti.

(*Chatter and sound of a piano*)

I had hardly set foot in the hall when Monsieur Verdurin rushed upon me and drew me apart.

VERDURIN: . . . I know we can count on your discretion. You have heard about Bergotte? My wife is distracted, but as you know, she doesn't wear her heart upon her sleeve. I beg you not

to mention the matter to her—the important thing is to keep her from *thinking*. Sh-h-h! She's coming now. Here's M. Proust, my dear!

MME VERDURIN: How good to see you after such a long time! I told my husband, "It's no use asking the wretch, depend upon it, he won't come—," but he said to me, "Our young friend will not desert the Faithful, especially when he learns that a certain person is to be present!"

MARCEL: Present! Is Albertine—?

MME VERDURIN: Yes, and in good time you shall talk to her. But first you must come along and meet all my children once more. It's just like our old Wednesdays—a regular Temple of Music. Even in these grave days we keep the torch alight. . . .

*(Door opens: music and chatter)*

MARCEL: (*Narrating*) Madame Verdurin opened the double doors of the salon with an air of desperate gallantry, readmitted me to the little clan. They were all there, the Cottards, Brichot, Saniette; Ski was seated at the piano, and leaning over his shoulder, like the marmoreal fold of fabric sculpted upon a funeral urn, was Albertine, who, perhaps to avoid acknowledging my entrance, was watching the keys with the rapt attention of a great cat contemplating a dust bath of sparrows. I would have gone straight to her side, but Madame Verdurin detained me.

MME VERDURIN: Have you seen Charlus? Is he coming to-night?

MARCEL: He told me he might be a little late.

MME VERDURIN: When did you see him? He didn't come with you?

MARCEL: We met at Madame de Guermantes'.

MME VERDURIN: Is that where you've been, with all those bores? I admit, I should find it quite intolerable. If there's one thing I cannot endure, it's being bored—

(*Ringling little bell to command attention*)

Ski! That will do for now. I can't hear a word M. Proust's saying. . . .

(*Music stops*)

MME VERDURIN: So the Guermantes still ask you to their circuses, do they?

COTTARD: What's that about circuses?

MME VERDURIN: Why, Professor Cottard, I was merely raising my eyebrows at the idea of M. Proust wasting his intellect upon the lions and tigers of the Faubourg.

COTTARD: I'll bet my boots he goes for the *panis* rather than the *circences*, eh, Monsieur? I expect that keeps its standard. Here, however, we have food for the mind, and no rationing either?

MME VERDURIN: You're sure Charlus is coming, M. Proust?

MARCEL: Quite sure, Madame.

MME VERDURIN: I thought he wouldn't stay away. I told him that unless he honoured us with a visit I might find no opportunity for giving him news of our friend, Morel. After all, people can't expect me to run after them! If they want something, they can always apply to me. They know where I live. It's no secret.

MARCEL: What news is that?

MME VERDURIN: Of Morel's whereabouts. I heard yesterday, through Captain von Sternberg. . . . You don't know the Captain, he's a recent addition to our little group. People say to me, "But the Germans, they are still our enemies," . . . to which I reply, "There are no enemies in the world of the Mind!" Von Sternberg is a brilliant poet and a charming man. He's writing a little cycle of songs for Ski to set to music. He's coming tonight and you shall meet him if you . . . or if you would rather not, it would be easy to arrange that you didn't. It's up to you. . . . What's that, Monsieur Saniette? Speak up, we can't hear a word you're saying. Have you got something in your mouth?

SANINETTE: I was only asking M. Proust if he'd heard the news about Bergotte.

MME VERDURIN: Don't mention that name here! . . . I will not think about Bergotte. I refuse to torment myself!

VERDURIN: (*In an undertone*) There, you fool, don't you know better than to distress her? Now she'll cry for a week, and drive us all to distraction.

SANINETTE: I only thought, if there was anything we could do, if any of us had any influence. . . .

MME VERDURIN: Influence? Let me tell you this, M. Saniette! My heart bleeds for Bergotte. I mourn him as an artist. I mourn him as a disciple. But whatever you may think of me, I cannot play the hypocrite. As a man, I consider him a traitor! Yes, a traitor! France was defeated in battle by an enemy not lost to generosity. Under the Marshal she has a hope of retrieving her glory. But Bergotte will not let her be! He wants her torn in pieces by civil war, her cities laid in ruins. . . . Yes, he would sacrifice her art, *he*, an artist, would sacrifice her art—

VERDURIN: Sidonie, Sidonie, calm yourself. You know how you'll suffer for this.

COTTARD: Take care, Madame! With your high blood pressure you can't afford to indulge the emotions.

VERDURIN: And it was you, Saniette, who began it all! Watch out, or you'll find yourself in disgrace.

SANINETTE: I beg your pardon. I only meant to express—

COTTARD: Anyone would have thought you meant "to despatch." You'll despatch our hostess if you upset her like that again. Eh, M. Brichot? What do you think?

BRICHOT: Of Maître Bergotte? I am of the opinion of our hostess that the gentleman, like his predecessor, M. de Voltaire, was not sufficiently content to cultivate his own garden but encroached too far upon the tender green plants of his neighbor. Whether it be Frederick the Great or Herr Reichkanzler Hitler, the boundary line is better observed.

COTTARD: Léontine! Don't stand about like that! Either take a hand in the conversation or stay outside. Since the topic's been introduced, you'd better have your say with the rest. What do you think?

MME COTTARD: I really don't know, my dear. Like Madame Verdurin I feel sorry. . . .

MME VERDURIN: Well, well, let's not pull long faces as if somebody were dead! Our good Bergotte will probably appear on the foreign wireless programs before long, anyway, and we shall have wasted our tears in vain. (*Rings her bell*) Ski! I command you to play for us.

PIANIST: What shall I play?

MME VERDURIN: Anything, anything!

(*The pianist drifts into music*)

No, no, no! Not the Vinteuil! (*Piano stops*) You know the effect it has on me, even now. Struggle as I may, I cannot stop weeping, and if I weep too copiously—

COTTARD: Struggle as you may? *Sein Kampf!*

MME VERDURIN: That reminds me! (*Tinkles her bell*) My children—all of you—gather round. Your Mistress has something to tell you. You won't believe it, but it is true. Do you know that, but for me, Herr Hitler would never have written *Mein Kampf*?

Yes, yes, you may exclaim, but it is simple fact! As long ago as 1922, when I was in Munich, I went to a gathering of Bohemians, intellectuals, revolutionaries—all sorts of queer people. There I was introduced to a shabby young man with the most magnetic blue eyes and a harsh, disturbing voice, who began to address me as if I were a meeting—a mass meeting, as if I were a hundred thousand people! I can't tell you how fascinating it was. When he had finished I said to him, "My dear young man, you have the gift of words—you have verve, inspiration—have you ever thought of writing a book?"

MARCEL: (*Narrating*) The attention of the little clan was so gripped by this recital that I was able at last to slip away and go in search of Albertine, who was standing apart at a window, her grave and luminous gaze fastened upon the starless sky as upon some face, the meaning of which she had understood and forgotten, and now understood once more.

ALBERTINE: Marcel! I hoped you would be here tonight, but I was afraid you would not.

MARCEL: My little Albertine. . . . (*Quickly*) But if you had really hoped to see me you'd have written to me, called on me, before this.

ALBERTINE: I don't know what you will think of me. I hardly like to explain.

MARCEL: There is nothing to explain. You wanted first to be sure what the Verdurins would do, whether they would receive me.

ALBERTINE: Oh, no! Now you are going to be cruel, and torture me with your horrible suspicions. As if I don't know you!

MARCEL: Let us go out into the garden. I must talk to you privately. . . .

(*Sounds of the party retreat*)

ALBERTINE: My dear boy, I'm sure I can't guess what you have to say to me. As for me not writing or calling, I might blame you for the same thing. After the Germans came, you never sent me a word or sign. I thought you might have gone to England.

MARCEL: I should have gone, but for you. Don't think I'm referring to our love—that is over. We both agreed that our lives should sever, that if we saw each other again it should be as friends, as dear friends, but as nothing more. Anything else would have been inexpressibly painful.

ALBERTINE: Then I don't know what you are talking about! Oh, it's the same old story, you question me and hint at me till I don't know whether I'm on my head or my heels!



MARCEL: Have you met Captain von Sternberg?

ALBERTINE: Von who? Oh, if it's some German or other. . . .

Mother Verdurin has the house full of them.

MARCEL: He writes poetry.

ALBERTINE: And sings it, too, that's the worst of it. He has a voice like a cornrake.

MARCEL: But, Albertine, my darling—or rather, dear friend, for I mustn't call you any more by our old names—if you can't remember the Captain, how are you able to remember the quality of his voice?

ALBERTINE: I didn't say I didn't remember him. I simply didn't remember him by name.

MARCEL: The Verdurins have accepted the situation? "*Travail, famille, patrie*?"

ALBERTINE: No doubt about that.

MARCEL: And you?

ALBERTINE: I don't bother my head about politics. I've better things to do.

MARCEL: You heard about Bergotte?

ALBERTINE: Yes.

MARCEL: Well?

ALBERTINE: I will confess to you, since we are alone, with only the trees to hear us, that it has made me terribly unhappy. I can't get it out of my mind.

MARCEL: Yet you are content to come to this house?

ALBERTINE: For all you know, your little Albertine may have her reasons. I know you think she's stupid, rattlepated, but one day she may surprise you!

MARCEL: How? In what way? Are you working against *them*?

ALBERTINE: I don't know what you mean.

MARCEL: Or for them? If you held my life in your hands, what would you do with it?

ALBERTINE: I'm sure that if I were ever in such a position I should cherish your dear life as if it were my own. What a Marcel! What a Marcel! Do you think me quite without grati-

tude? If ever I become clever I shall owe it entirely to you: and if ever I become good-hearted and generous, as you are, it will be through your example. (Pause) But I am not working for anybody. I haven't the least idea what you mean.

MME VERDURIN: (Calling) Albertine! Where is my little piece of Perfection?

ALBERTINE: (Whispering) They tell me it's the name she used to give Madame Swann. Now, it seems, it's descended upon me.

MME VERDURIN: Albertine!

ALBERTINE: (Calling back) Yes, Madame?

MME VERDURIN: Ah, there you are, deserting us all, letting M. Proust rob us of your company! Captain von Sternberg is here, and wishes to see you. He says you are to go with him to a ball.

ALBERTINE: Tell him I won't be a moment.

MME VERDURIN: He's waiting, my dear!

MARCEL: So this is the Captain whose name you don't remember!

ALBERTINE: (Calling) I'm coming, Madame. (To Marcel) Yes, I admit it, I told you a lie, but only because I was afraid you might think badly of me, that you might not understand. You don't know how terrifying you can be with those great eyes of yours, blazing away like lamps! Yes, I do know the Captain, but I don't like him. I let him take me out for what I can learn from him. . . . Anyway, why shouldn't I have a bit of fun? One's only young once, and I'm sure I don't see why I should immure myself like a nun because of some stupid war which is no concern of mine!

MARCEL: (Pause) My poor little Albertine. . . . Do you realize . . . ?

ALBERTINE: What?

MARCEL: That now I shall never know, in any conceivable context, which side you are on?

MME VERDURIN: (Calling) Miss Perfection! Come here at once. We're waiting for you. . . .

MARCEL: (*Narrating*) Albertine gave a nervous, impatient toss of her head, tapped her foot once or twice to the ground, and then darted away from me toward the house. I followed her in, and would have pursued her to the drawing-room had I not caught a glimpse, through the door, which was slightly ajar, of M. Verdurin's study, of the Mistress and Monsieur de Charlus.

CHARLUS: (*Fading in*) I should, of course, have been delighted to visit you for the sake of your company alone, Madame, and for the excellent company you keep. They are all there, are they not? All your performers . . . but I understood that you had news for me.

MME VERDURIN: Why, yes, to be sure: but it will keep until later. There are some new additions to the little clan whom I want you to meet—Captain von Sternberg, for example, is a charming young man who should be much to your taste, a true artist, if only he is able to accept the guidance I can give him.

CHARLUS: I am not charmed, Madame, by these dandies who appear to spend their lives between the barber and the breeches-maker.

MME VERDURIN: You don't want an introduction to the Captain, then?

CHARLUS: Perhaps you are afflicted by intermittent deafness. I stated that I was not charmed by him, and you may therefore take it that I am in no great hurry to make his acquaintance. (*Violently*) Your news, Madame! Where is Morel?

MME VERDURIN: He is serving his country as an artist should.

CHARLUS: How?

MME VERDURIN: With modesty, with generosity, in a realization that true art knows no frontiers. Herr Goebbels has personally invited him to perform for the troops of the Reich in Germany. He has already played for the Fuehrer himself.

CHARLUS: For the Fuehrer himself!

MME VERDURIN: I thought I should astonish you. I believe Morel played his own arrangement of the *Liebestod* from *Tris-*

tan, the Vinteuil Sonata, and a fantasia upon the Waltz Song from *The Merry Widow*. . . . Monsieur le Baron, you are not looking well. Surely, being of our mind, you can only rejoice with us—

CHARLUS: Madame, I am perfectly well. I was simply taken aback for a moment by the beauty of the prospect. *The Merry Widow*. . . . Can one get in touch with him? Do you think your absurd Captain with the moustaches is a person who might be intrusted with a message?

MME VERDURIN: You shall ask him yourself. But wait. . . . I thought you would not welcome the introduction?

CHARLUS: I shall tolerate it, if it is in a good cause, as politicians abroad are said to tolerate, or even to encourage, at election time, the embrace of malodorous and unenfranchised babes in arms.

MME VERDURIN: So far as influence in the right quarters goes, I think you will not find the Captain unenfranchised. . . . So will you accept my offices?

CHARLUS: I will accept them, Madame, on condition that you make the introduction correctly. Though I realize you are not in society, I must remind you that I must not be introduced to him but *he to me*, who am Duc de Brabant, Demoiseau de Montargis, Prince d'Oleron, de Carency, de Viareggio et des Dunes.  
...

MARCEL: (*Narrating*) By the time I made my way back to the drawing-room, Albertine had disappeared; Madame Verdurin informed me that she had returned home in order to change into her gown for the ball. I talked for a little while with Brichot and the Cottards and then took my leave, only to find once more that M. de Charlus was close upon my heels. I told him I had been invited to look in upon Madame de Guermantes upon my way home, but that I was doubtful whether the invitation had been sincerely meant.

The Baron, however, insisted somewhat irritably that I should do as I had been commanded, and, adding that he himself

would be returning there for a purpose of his own, suggested that we should share a cab. He had a *laisser-passer* that was in good order. Recalling his remarks to the effect that he had something to say to me, I waited for him to begin; but he remained silent during the drive, his lips violently twisted as if in irony or displeasure. Upon re-entering the Hôtel de Guermantes, M. de Charlus told me to go upstairs by myself, and not to mention to the Duchess that he had accompanied me.

CHARLUS: I shall see her later, perhaps. There is a matter of business to which I must attend.

MARCEL: (*Narrating*) I found Madame de Guermantes, as she had promised, at her own hearth, for the night was cold for May and a small fire had been lighted. She and the Duke, however, were not alone; a guest who had arrived after myself had not yet taken his departure. M. de Norpois rose as I entered, held out his hand, bowed his tall figure and fixed his blue and glacial eyes, now delicately threaded with blood as a map with rivers, upon my face. His bow was both cordial and abrupt, a recognition of old friendship coupled with intimation of the hope that I might not, at this stage of European history, be tempted to overstep its bounds. Having greeted me, he at once resumed his conversation with the Duchess and her husband. . . .

NORPOIS: As I was saying, Madame, the hour has come for France to make up her mind whether she desires or does not desire to realize her national aspirations. If she waits much longer, she will risk being too late. The unity of our country is essential, and I believe that this—provided it is possible to check the few agitators and mischief-makers—may well be achieved.

DUCHESSE DE GUER: And yet I am sad for France.

DUC DE GUER: That's true; strictly between ourselves, mind, Oriane has doubts that are still unresolved.

DUCHESSE DE GUER: You think, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, that

the enemy will be sufficiently generous to permit us to arise from our knees?

NORPOIS: As I said to Monsieur Abetz yesterday: "Sir, your master has it in his power to be the Caesar of Britain or the Cromwell of Ireland. Which will be his choice?"

duc de guer: And his reply?

NORPOIS: He simply bowed his head. But I knew that I had moved him. I sensed his good-will. Nevertheless I think we must not try it too far. Monsieur!

duchesse de guer: Monsieur Proust, the Ambassador is speaking to you.

MARCEL: I beg your pardon.

NORPOIS: What are your plans, Monsieur?

MARCEL: I—have no plans at the moment.

NORPOIS: A word to the wise. There is the case of the son of one of my friends which, *mutatis mutandis*, is very much like yours. He, too, has chosen to "stick to his post," as the saying goes, and without caring what people might say, he has settled down to "brave the storm."

I happen to know, the powers that be—no names, no pack-drill—would be prepared to put no obstacles in the way of his departure, might, in fact, be prepared to facilitate it. A friend of mine in the American Embassy assures me that his country is always prepared to give asylum to young men like him and yourself, and if you wished me to put in a word for you I should be pleased, for the sake of your excellent father, to do what I could.

MARCEL: But Monsieur, I—

NORPOIS: Oh, you must not take this as a positive ukase on my part! But I think our friends here would agree with me.

duc de guer: Of course.

duchesse de guer: I confess I should feel happier, Marcel—you don't mind me calling you by your first name? We're such old friends now—I confess I should feel happier if I thought you were in a country where your talents could flourish more healthily! You'll be cross with me, Basin, I know, but I do feel

that the present fashion in *Kultur* may stunt our friend's intellectual growth. Besides—

DUC DE GUER: Besides what? Damn it, Oriane, no spies here! You can speak plainly to the man. He's like me—he appreciates bluntness. Don't you, Monsieur—eh?

DUCHESS DE GUER: Oh, Basin, why will you insist on plain speaking?—It's always the people who shout for it the loudest that detest it the most. Anyway, there's nothing to be plain about. Is there?

DUC DE GUER: No need to hedge, Oriane. You know why we wanted Monsieur Proust to come back here, meet us alone in the bosom of the family, as it were. We hear things. We're not in with the "nobs," of course, but a few little tips do come our way. Frankly, Monsieur, we think you should pack your bag. In your own best interests.

NORPOIS: If I may intervene in a friendly spirit, my young sir, and without beating about the bush, you are blessed in your friends. They are loyal. They are true. And they will, if you insist, continue to receive you—

DUCHESS DE GUER: We're honored to receive him—ain't we, Basin?

NORPOIS: —but!—this is the point. It is conceivable that you may unwittingly cause them some embarrassment. I repeat my offer to mention your name to the American Ambassador.

MARCEL: If you consider, Monsieur, that I am likely to go the way of Bergotte—

NORPOIS: Ah, Bergotte! I have heard the rumors, but doubt their veracity. For the man's own sake, I hope he is in safety; but I could not consider him a loss to literature. He cannot place to his credit—does not carry in his baggage, if I may use the term—a single novel that is at all lofty in its conception. You disagree? Well, well, we must not quarrel with the pioneering enthusiasms of youth. I don't know if you are following the fashions of literature in England. There are a number of young men grouped around various periodicals of whom the adventurous young speak well, for instance. . . .

MARCEL: (*Narrating*) Realizing that I had received my dismissal, that the doors of the Hôtel de Guermantes were about to be closed upon my contagious person perhaps for ever, I took my leave of the Duke and Duchess, bowed low to M. de Norpois, and accepted from all three pressing invitations as meaningless as the lover's insistence that, after death, his beloved shall join him in Elysium. Sad at heart I went slowly down the great staircase and into the courtyard where, owing to my own preoccupation, I nearly collided with M. de Charlus and the Duchess's footman, who were continuing the conversation they had begun earlier in the evening. I was just in time to catch a few words. . . .

CHARLUS: You're sure you can get it to England? You will not forget what I told you? Your memory is sound?

FOOTMAN: I've got it safe in my head, M. le Baron.

CHARLUS: And mind you watch your step! Not a breath to the others! They're not with us, remember that.

FOOTMAN: You can trust me, M. le Baron.

CHARLUS: You're a good fellow. By the way, what's happened to that brother of yours, the one with the charming little nose, who lived at Illiers?

FOOTMAN: He got over to join De Gaulle, M. le Baron.

CHARLUS: Good lad. Get along with you now, and—(*Bellowing*) Monsieur!

MARCEL: (*Narrating*) He pursued me across the cobbles and caught my arm in a cruel grip.

CHARLUS: Eavesdropping, were you? Can't I hold a private conversation without a dozen little gentlemen creeping about me with their ears cocked?

MARCEL: I beg your pardon. I didn't see you until I was almost upon you.

CHARLUS: You will walk with me for a little. It is safer to talk in the street, where one can put a wall of space between oneself and the enemy. . . .



MARCEL: (Narrating) We walked slowly by the river, upon which the moon was now casting her first indecisive and watery rays. M. de Charlus had transferred his grip from my arm to my shoulder, his manner that of a friendly policeman who conducts to jail a criminal with whom he feels great sympathy, but whose escape he has no intention of permitting, lest he lose his promotion.

CHARLUS: (Fading in) Since you have heard so much, you may as well hear more. Your racial peculiarity, I fancy, insures my safety: should you feel inclined to tattle to the Gestapo in the hope of buying favors for yourself, it will be your word against mine. And mine will be believed. My Germanophile sympathies are well known—and the better believed because I am open in the expression of my distaste for the Nazis. The officer class trusts me; I have a respect for the Prussian and he, for his part, is prepared to take the place of the Glorious Archangel Michael as my protecting angel.

MARCEL: But, sir, why should you run such risks? What has made you change your mind?

CHARLUS: Like the rest of them, you cannot bring yourself to believe my simplest statements. Frederick the Great I can accept; I could accept the Emperor William and Emperor Franz Josef (who, by the way, always addressed me as Monsignor); but I do not care to see France in the grip of the sanitary orderly—or the corporal, if you will. It's a single step.

MARCEL: But Morel—

CHARLUS: I shall be obliged if you will not take that name upon your lips. It has become so much bile upon my own. I had to give Madame Verdurin the impression that I meant to write to him; but the only words I could write would shrivel his eyes in his head. Morel!

MAARCEL: I'm sorry. (Pause) Surely Madame de Guermantes is in some sympathy with us?

CHARLUS: Have you no brains at all? Have they been addled by fright, or by adoration of your charming cousin (who, I believe,

is in the pay of the Gestapo, but my information may not be exact)? Madame de Guermantes is always loyal to the winner. She will be loyal to this one, so long as he remains; and then as loyal as a leech to the next. There is no difference between her drawing-room and Madame Verdurin's—save that Oriane does not yet invite the *Obersturmbannführer* to her “days.” Oriane takes the long view, and doesn't propose to compromise her future more than is strictly necessary—which, perhaps, sets her a step above Madame Verdurin and the woman who attends the toilet in the Champs Élysées. Their “salons” are open to all the rag-tag and bob-tail, to tail coats and jack boots alike.

MARCEL: Tonight, I received my dismissal from the Hôtel de Guermantes.

CHARLUS: Exactly. And Madame Verdurin will kick you out of doors tomorrow.

Where will you go? To England? If that's your fancy, I can send you an introduction to a cousin of the young person with whom I was conversing just now—the cousin is a friend of mine, a delightful fellow with a breadth of judgment uncommon in his class. He's with De Gaulle now, and when I've done my work here, I may join him. Now then: let us be businesslike. If you go to England, what will you do there? What will be your plans?

MARCEL: Well, Monsieur, I have been meaning to write a book. . . .

(A silence)

NARRATOR: The moon rising to her full illumines them as they lean for a moment upon the parapet of the Seine; the small young man, slender, his great black eyes mournful with time past and time to come; the tall, bulky man, purse-mouthed, the light just striping the silver pigeons' wings of his hair. . . .

CHARLUS: A book? About what? A romance? A history? I hope you'll give us something better than that pretentious little volume of yours with all those scribbles by Madeleine Lemaire. . . .

MARCEL: It will be a book about Time. . . .

NARRATOR: Si du moins il m'était laissé assez de temps pour accomplir mon oeuvre, je ne manquerais pas de la marquer au sceau de ce Temps dont l'idée s'imposait à moi avec tant de force aujourd'hui, et j'y décrirais les hommes, cela dût-il les faire ressembler à des êtres monstrueux, comme occupant dans le Temps une place autrement considérable que celle si restreinte qui leur est réservée dans l'espace, une place, au contraire, prolongée sans mesure, puisqu'ils touchent simultanément, comme des géants, plongés dans les années, à des époques vécues par eux, si distantes—entre lesquelles tant de jours sont venus se placer—dans le Temps.

They stand like giants, immersed in Time.

These are the times that try men's systems of education. In the emerging countries of Africa and Asia the problem is how to develop an educational system that will produce the literate and informed citizenry necessary for self-government, plus a layer of professional, technical, and political leaders. In our own highly developed country the problems are pretty much the same: how to get an informed citizenry out of the public schools and now, increasingly, out of the colleges, and how to get intellectual leaders out of the graduate and professional schools.

**By Bernard R. Berelson**

## **THE CASE FOR GRADUATE EDUCATION**

*Forgotten by the public, maligned by the professionals—what actually is the state of graduate education today?*

I suppose that, roughly speaking, concern over education in the United States today is proportional to the number of parents involved. As a result, it is the graduate school that is the forgotten man so far as the public is concerned.

But if the system of graduate study has not received sufficient appreciation from the public, it has not lacked for scrutiny and controversy within academic life. The roll call of recent statements of what is right and wrong—usually the latter—would include the Committee of Fifteen report sponsored

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by the Fund for the Advancement of Education, the "White Paper" of the Committee on Policies in Graduate Education of the Association of Graduate Schools, a symposium last year in the *Journal of Higher Education*, reports by the President's Committee on Education beyond the High School, the Educational Policies Commission, the American Council on Education, the National Education Association, the trustees of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and several others. Even the graduate students have got into the act: a group at the University of Minnesota founded a quarterly journal devoted to the intellectual and practical problems of the *Graduate Student of English*, now in its fourth volume. As a final legitimization, the *New York Times* has carried several stories and columns devoted to the problems of graduate education, a few letters to the editor, and even an editorial on the deficiencies of Ph.D. training. So the debate has been continuous and the positions strongly held. The assumptions have been various, the values ambiguous or in conflict, and the facts alleged, contradictory, scanty, or altogether absent.

Let us look at the present situation through the window of eight criticisms.

*Proposition 1: Graduate study is presently in a state of crisis.*

If all he did was read the educational literature and attend educational meetings, certainly an outsider would think so. Most of the reports I just mentioned were highly critical of graduate work, to put it mildly, and some of them have been downright polemical, as, for example, Earl McGrath's recent pamphlet on *The Graduate School and the Decline of Liberal Education*, in which the former is once more cast as the villain responsible for the latter. All of them call upon the graduate school to mend its ways; this peroration from the report of the President's Commission on Higher Education is not unrepresentative: "It is said that an entrenched priesthood will never

reform itself; American graduate school faculties must demonstrate the falsity of this axiom."

Whether or not the graduate faculty is an intrenched priesthood, the real question is: What needs to be reformed? The sobering fact—at least it is sobering to me—is that there is hardly a current criticism, suggestion, complaint, question, problem, or proposal dealing with graduate study that was not put forward in any five-year period since 1900, when the Association of American Universities was founded.

It is instructive and often entertaining to review the discussions of the Association in the first years of its existence, at a time when only a few hundred doctorates were being awarded annually. There is hardly a topic active today that was not being debated then, and not infrequently in the same terms. Fellowships, the meaning of research, the character of the dissertation, the quality of the students, the foreign-language requirement, the major-minor problem at the doctoral level, the proper examinations, the role of the Master's degree, preparation for college teaching, college-university relations, uniform statistics—all these topics came up in the very first year of the Association. Let me give you a quick idea.

At the 1901 meeting Charles Eliot asked for greater "sifting" of the doctoral dissertation because of its excessive length; Nicholas Murray Butler complained about "how frequently the same persons will offer themselves as candidates (for fellowships) at several institutions" and told what steps he had taken to stop the practice at Columbia; Henry Pratt Judson of Chicago asked rhetorically whether "the graduate school itself, after all, is not practically a professional school" and observed that the "demand for specialists as teachers is now so imperative that artificial stimulus for graduate work is no longer a necessity" (he referred to fellowships as "pre-doctorate bounties" and "a species of protective tariff on domestic

learning"); and Alan Briggs of Harvard called for broader training for prospective college teachers. In 1902 a report on the Master's degree debated whether it should be regarded as a terminal degree or as a steppingstone to the doctorate. In 1905 a dean complained that "a man can hardly expect to get an appointment of a higher grade than instructor on his record as a teacher alone," and three years later Abraham Flexner was already deploring that the university had sacrificed college teaching at the altar of research. In 1909, the year he became president of Harvard, Abbott Lawrence Lowell spoke of the "monstrous figures" (i.e., large numbers) attending graduate schools and added that through the fellowship subsidy "we are in danger of making the graduate school the easiest path for the good but docile scholar with little energy, independence or ambition. There is danger of attracting an industrious mediocrity which will become later the teaching force in colleges and secondary schools."

In 1903 William James was already concerned lest "the Ph.D. octopus" crush the true spirit of learning in the universities and become the exclusive badge for employment in the smaller colleges that "hope to compensate for the obscurity of the names of their officers of instruction by the abundance of decorative titles by which those names are followed on the pages of the catalogs where they appear. The dazzled reader of the list, the parent or student, says to himself, 'This must be a terribly distinguished crowd,—their titles shine like the stars in the firmament; Ph.D.'s, S.D.'s, Litt.D.'s bespangle the page as if they were sprinkled over it from a pepper caster.' . . . The more widespread becomes the popular belief that our diplomas are indispensable hallmarks to show the sterling metal of their holders, the more widespread these corruptions will become. We ought to look to the future carefully," he said, "for it takes



generations for a national custom, once rooted, to be grown away from."

Certainly the demand for Ph.D.'s on academic faculties is more of a "national custom" today than it was in James's day and it shows no sign of letting-up: quite the contrary. Neither, it must be said, does the debate. Are "young men of undistinguished ability and indifferent personal traits . . . diligently grubbing their way to the doctorate?" That description comes from the AAU Proceedings of 1933. Is the graduate school doing wrong by the preparation of college teachers? There were strong efforts thirty-five years ago to put the case, just as there are today. Are too many unqualified institutions moving into doctoral study? There are many who thought so forty years ago. Is the doctoral degree program too highly specialized? There were advocates of that position in the AAU fifty years ago. Is the "flood of research publications swamping men"? The graduate dean at Princeton thought so fifty-five years ago. Is the Master's degree confused and unsatisfactory? It was so reported to the AAU every decade in this century.

So, is graduate education in a state of crisis today? Yes—if it always has been. No—if something special has to occur before the term "crisis" becomes appropriate. For it was ever thus in this enterprise—standards were never being realized, the students never good enough, the programs never sound enough, the institutional base never quite limited enough, the fields conferring the doctorate never quite selective enough, the entire emphasis and quality never quite right.

Now, simply because such criticisms have always been made, and in largely the same way, does not necessarily mean that they are wrong. Maybe the critics were never being listened to and therefore had to repeat their criticisms over and over. On the other hand, maybe cooler and wiser heads have been prevailing. I have my own opinions about that, but at the

moment I content myself simply with noting that the body of today's criticism is not notably different from what the system has been hearing for sixty years—except, perhaps, in bulk.

It seems to me that there is need for some perspective on the chronic criticisms of graduate study. There is almost as much complaint about graduate education as about the human condition, and for the same reasons. Those who take part in it are talking about themselves: their lives, rich or wasted; for graduate students, the crucial step in their careers; for faculty and presidents, the world most closely around them. Some of the complaint is professional, coming more from social scientists than from biologists. Some of it is situational, coming from those toward the bottom of the academic totem pole. Some of it is endemic, coming from a highly articulate and self-critical sector of the American intelligentsia, the humanists. Some of it is misshapen: the image at variance with the fact. Some of it is suspect: the easy repetition of the cliché. Somehow the rhetoric of the discussion has got stuck and needs oiling.

*Proposition 2: The graduate school is not training people for what they subsequently do.*

This is what I call the "market-research argument," namely, that the product should be prepared directly for its subsequent use. It is made primarily by those critics who disapprove of the graduate school's emphasis upon research and want something more or different in the way of preparing college teachers. For example, the Committee of Fifteen made this argument quite strongly, and only a year or two ago Dean Hayward Keniston complained about "the anomalous situation that college teaching is the one profession which a man or woman may enter without any specific training for the tasks they are to perform. Schools of law and medicine aim at training lawyers and doc-

tors; graduate schools aim at training in research, not at the preparation of teachers."

Now, to begin with, this is a little like arguing that law schools ought to give training in business and politics because so many lawyers end up in corporations and legislatures, but there is more to the matter than that.

If, indeed, the graduate school should train people for what they subsequently do, what exactly is that? The first broad answer is that only about 60 per cent of the current recipients of the doctorate go into academic employment in higher education—and the trend has consistently been down during this century. Around 1900 70–80 per cent went into colleges and universities, in the late 1920's 70–75 per cent, in the 1930's 65 per cent, and now 60 per cent. This trend reflects not only the greater demand for Ph.D.'s outside academic life but also the attractiveness of salaries and other working conditions there. Naturally, this figure varies by field: over 80 per cent of the Ph.D.'s in the humanities go into college or university life, nearly 70 per cent of those in the social sciences, about 60 per cent in the biological sciences and professional fields, and only 40 per cent in the physical sciences. So, if one were going to model training on subsequent activity, much of the training in the sciences, where the problem is presumably most severe, would be directed away from academic teaching, not toward it.

But the story does not end there, either. The argument typically refers to preparation for "college teaching," that is, at the undergraduate level. About 60 per cent of the current recipients of the doctorate do go into "college or university employment," but only 20 per cent go into "undergraduate teaching in a liberal arts college." The rest go into university work, where they have the opportunity and the ambition to teach graduate courses for which research training is the *sine qua non*. And, over the next years of the so-called college bulge

in enrolment, the ratio between university and college employment of doctorates will probably go up, since the universities will be taking a major share of the increased enrolments. In addition, according to my survey, almost all college presidents believe that "the research training experience at the doctoral level, and particularly the dissertation, is necessary or desirable for the undergraduate teacher."

Then too, there is the growing importance of full-time research, mainly in the sciences, both inside and outside the universities. Inside, there are a growing number of research positions and even institutes, so that now about 10 per cent of the resident instructional staff consists of full-time researchers. Outside the universities we have witnessed since the war a remarkable growth in organized research activities in industrial laboratories and governmental installations. Today, the single organization in this country that employs most Ph.D.'s is not Harvard and Yale or Illinois or Michigan; it is DuPont. Furthermore, General Electric has more than twice as many Ph.D.'s on its staff as does Princeton, Shell has more than MIT, Union Carbide or Eastman or IBM has about as many as Northwestern or Cal Tech. Such industrial firms employ more Ph.D.'s today than do all the liberal-arts colleges in the country put together, and the federal government has about as many as do the top ten universities put together.

So, if we consider the increasing national importance of research—not simply with respect to the national security but in a whole range of spheres, from health to the economy, and from technology to psychological and social well-being—this seems an inopportune time for cutting down research training in the name of the undergraduate teacher. If doctoral candidates are to be trained for what they are going to do after getting the degree, then training in research must be provided—yet the "overemphasis" on research training is precisely what

the present doctoral program is being criticized for and what the critics seek to replace.

To the argument that few Ph.D.'s subsequently publish, the record shows that fifteen years after the doctorate 80-90 per cent of all recipients in the natural sciences will have published something besides their dissertations of sufficient stature to warrant inclusion in a scholarly bibliographical source; more than three-fourths in psychology, more than two-thirds in philosophy and English, a little less in education, and a fourth to a third in history.

In short, it appears that both of the major assumptions of the market argument are faulty: fewer than "most" are engaged in college teaching, and more than a "few" publish research and scholarly titles. My own conclusion is that this argument cannot itself justify a radical change in the priorities presently assigned in the graduate training program, away from research training and toward the preparation of college teachers.

*Proposition 3: The Ph.D. is given in too many fields and too many institutions, so that standards are going down.*

From the beginning there has been concern about the fields in which the doctorate is given. In 1912, for example, Dean Woodbridge asked the AAU: "Since the degree is conferred in Sanskrit and in animal husbandry, in philosophy and highway engineering, for what does it essentially stand?"

The matter came to a head at Harvard when the field of education applied for entry and, after a long and acrimonious debate there, was allowed to give the doctorate but not the Ph.D. As things stand now, Harvard still gives the Ed.D. in education, Chicago gives the Ph.D., and Columbia gives both. Now I am personally not worried about such symbolic considerations. It might have been neater if from the beginning the Ph.D. had been reserved for graduate work in the arts and

sciences and if the professional fields had set up their own doctorates—but that did not happen. Despite all the jokes about it, everybody wanted the Ph.D. as evidence that they had got to the very top of the mountain. I feel relaxed about the matter because I cannot see why the conferral of some doctorates in highway engineering or animal husbandry, or education or business or social work or librarianship, in any way limits the number or the quality of doctorates in the academic fields.

Essentially the same point applies with reference to the spread of doctoral work to more and more institutions. In 1900 the major institutions engaged in doctoral work were seven great private universities: Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Hopkins, Pennsylvania, and Yale. A couple of years ago, by the same definition, there were about thirty-five institutions in the field, of which the seven latest entrants are these: Indiana, UCLA, Boston, Maryland, Michigan State, Syracuse, and Washington. All the national graduate schools were established and in full operation by 1930. Since then have come the regional, state, and urban institutions like Washington in the Pacific Northwest, Southern California and UCLA for that area, North Carolina and Texas for different parts of the South, Purdue and Indiana and Michigan State in the Midwest, Boston for that urban center.

As for the Master's degree, some of the great universities that used to dominate the field have now fallen far behind. In 1957-58, for example, Penn State gave more Master's degrees than did Harvard, Temple more than Yale, Louisiana State more than Chicago, and Oklahoma State more than Cornell. At the doctoral level the picture is by no means so extreme, but even there a couple of years ago Purdue gave almost as many doctorates as Chicago did, Southern California about as many as Pennsylvania, Penn State more than Princeton, Indi-

ana more than Cornell, Michigan State far more than Johns Hopkins.

This trend has been pronounced even in the past ten years or so. If the thirty-five largest institutions are arranged by their relative growth from 1948 to 1958, the institutions at the low end of the curve include Cal Tech, Harvard, Cornell, Yale, Chicago, MIT, and Johns Hopkins, whereas those at the high end are Indiana, Michigan State, Washington, Syracuse, Maryland, Boston, Purdue, and UCLA. The newer entrants are growing much faster than are the older ones.

In addition, there has been a gradual shift in the load of doctoral study from the private to the public universities. Only a few years ago, for the first time, more doctorates were given by the public universities than by the private ones. Since the former are sure to grow faster in the years ahead, it is not unlikely that a decade hence the private universities will be awarding not much more than two out of every five doctorates in the country.

Finally, there is another development that requires me to mention a fact of life in graduate study that, like other facts of life, is seldom discussed openly, though it is of crucial importance. This is the fact that some universities are better than others—certainly better in faculty, in students, in products, in reputation, and probably better in program, too. Here the significant point is that the relative production of doctorates by the better universities has been on a long decline. In 1925 the "top five" universities produced over 40 per cent of the doctorates and the "top ten" over 60 per cent. A couple of years ago the "top five" produced 20 per cent and the "top ten" 34 per cent. Furthermore, there are now a number of "coming" institutions that have already committed themselves to the development of doctoral programs and are moving ahead fast: Missouri, Florida, Duke, Rutgers, Rochester, Ford-

ham, Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, Louisiana State, Utah, Oregon State, Western Reserve, Denver, Oklahoma—most of which entered into doctoral study on any scale only since the war.

With such decentralization has inevitably come a concern for standards. Fifty years ago, when doctoral training was limited to a handful of the "great universities," they could quite readily maintain an even set of standards. Now, however, the enterprise is too large, too dispersed, too differentiated for that. But everyone knows that a doctorate from Harvard or Berkeley or Columbia or Chicago does not mean the same thing as does a doctorate from a newer and less prestigious institution. In any case, the production of more second class doctorates, even though they may lower the national average, does not affect the production of first-class doctorates. We shall have as many and more of the latter plus the former as well, and at the doctoral level large numbers are now needed and for a widely diverse set of institutions. And it is probably true that no one is fooled by the tag who does not want to be.

So increased production down the line, even if it is of lower average quality, is useful in staffing still other institutions down the line who cannot afford to attract the products of the best institutions and who would otherwise do worse. If one deplores this situation, he is complaining about salary scales in Lower Academia, objecting that prestige means too much to people, regretting that there are not more bright people, or trying to repeal the law of propinquity.

*Proposition 4: The graduate schools will not produce enough doctorates to staff the faculties of higher education during the 1960's.*

Here is one of the major crises of the day—with a capital "C." Where are the teachers going to come from to handle the imminent bulge in enrolments? According to the Com-



mittee of Fifteen: "To expect that by 1970 the proportion of college teachers holding the Ph.D. degree will have declined from the present 40 per cent to 20 per cent is not statistical hysteria; but grass roots arithmetic." Hardly a discussion of higher education these days does not start with the "impending tidal wave" ahead, and the crucial figures are used so often that they gain credence by their very repetition.

Now it is difficult enough to work one's way through educational statistics for last year; how much more hazardous is the journey through the numbers of the future! But it is necessary, in order to determine whether the numbers problem is sufficient justification for substantial changes in doctoral programs in order to meet the demands of the decade.

Leaving aside the numerous detailed computations involved in these extrapolations, I shall present to you here only my general conclusion and some of the considerations underlying it. My conclusion is that the numbers game is by no means lost: it is not a sufficient reason for radical reforms in doctoral programs, for turning our attention away from quality to primary concern with quantity.

In the first place, the projections usually cited as cause for concern, if not alarm, all leave considerable room for judgment—and guesses!—as is indicated by the very fact that they often disagree with one another. Again, if we are to learn from the past, the forecasts in this field have traditionally been pessimistic. For example, according to the President's Commission on Higher Education in 1947, we need to have three hundred thousand "teaching faculty" this fall, whereas we actually will have about two-thirds that number—though most of us do not feel we are missing the mark by that much these days. Currently, the two major sources of prediction are, I think, both off the target in overestimating the number of new doctorates needed to keep up our present faculty ratio

and in underestimating the number of doctorates that the system will produce.

What actually is the problem? It is that within a fifteen-year period we shall have to double our baccalaureate ranks. But baccalaureate degrees have doubled or more every fifteen years or so in this country—whereas doctorates have more than kept pace by doubling every decade. Remember that the college bulge will become the graduate-school bulge four years later. Even over a sixteen-year period covering World War II, when doctoral production was very low, the proportion of doctorates on the faculties of accredited four-year institutions went up by 10 per cent or so.

Here, as elsewhere, higher education has an important choice to make. For example, raising the teacher-student ratio by one makes a difference at the anticipated level of enrolment of about 25,000 teachers. And, over all, the colleges and universities should have something to say about how many students they will take and the society will have to decide how much higher education—and of what quality—it is willing to pay for. My own feeling is that, if enrolment in 1970 is not much over six million, then we have a good chance to increase the present proportion of doctorates in the classrooms of higher education by 1970, not lower it.

*Proposition 5: Doctoral study takes too long.*

The critics who fear that the system is going to turn out too few doctorates in the years ahead, those who believe that the whole emphasis on research is wrong, those who think that the degree has fallen off from traditional standards, even those who want things added—all of them agree that the period of doctoral study is too long. Considering that so many people hold such strong convictions on the matter, one would think that at least the facts on how long it does take would be readily available and generally accepted. Alas, that is not the case.

But the general impression is summed up in the phrase: the "most protracted period of preparation in any profession."

The figures on "how long the doctorate takes" do not always agree simply because there are three ways to measure them: (1) elapsed time between receiving the Bachelor's degree and receiving the doctorate; (2) elapsed time between entering upon graduate study and receiving the doctorate; and (3) the actual time spent in doing the work for the degree. Each of these, of course, gives a smaller number than the preceding one, and each is a reasonable and useful measure, depending upon the question to which it is the answer.

How long does it take from Bachelor's to Doctor's? It takes about eight years as a median in the arts and sciences and about twelve years in the professional fields. Within the arts and sciences, the natural sciences take less time and the social sciences, and especially the humanities, more. From start to finish, the median is about five years in both the arts and sciences and the professional fields—a little higher in the social sciences and the humanities. In actual time at work, it takes the arts and sciences about three and one-half years and the professional fields only three. So the actual time is less than half the time elapsed since the baccalaureate for the arts and sciences and only about a quarter for the professions. In all likelihood, this picture has not changed a great deal over the last twenty-five years.

As part of this concern with the "Ph.D. stretch-out," there have recently been several calls to set a clear norm for how long it should take to get the doctoral degree. The norm proposed is usually three to four years, and on this point almost everyone seems to agree. Yet the norm proposed is almost exactly what it now does take in full-time equivalence. Hence, when people call for the establishment of a norm for the duration of doctoral work for the full-time qualified student, they

should know that it is here: it is agreed upon and it is being realized in practice. The problem is not how much time the student should spend in working on his degree but, rather, over how long a period of time he should do it. And that depends, to a large extent, on money. The more support a field has in the form of fellowships or research assistantships that contribute to the dissertation, the faster its students complete the degree. To try to solve the problem of duration by calling for changes in the actual program of work simply misses the point: the problem is primarily one of support, not of requirements.

And there is another irony here in the debate over doctoral study. The critics of the length of the doctoral work want the candidates turned out faster. Why? So that they will be available for academic employment. But that is precisely what they are engaged in, many of them full-time. Even if the candidate did finish in a shorter period of elapsed time, though with the same actual time spent on the degree, there would be little gain for the system—only a redistribution of academic talents institutionally and at a higher rate of pay.

*Proposition 6: The doctoral dissertation is being weakened.*

The traditional conception of the dissertation is clear. It was supposed to be "an original and significant contribution to knowledge." Now that, of course, is only a statement of intent. The decision as to what was sufficiently original and significant, what was contributory and, indeed, what was knowledge, was left to the departments—as, no doubt, it had to be.

Over the years, however, questions have arisen not only about realizing that aim but even about the appropriateness of the aim itself. As for originality, for example, the author of the dissertation in the natural sciences these days is not really considered an independent investigator but, rather, a member of a research team. On the humanistic side of the campus, Dean

William DeVane of Yale told the American Council on Education Conference in 1958 that "Thomas Carlyle had a word for it. . . . He says that the essence of originality is not that a thing be new but that it be a man's own." With regard to "contribution to knowledge," the Committee of Fifteen distinguished sharply between that honorific term and "a merely arithmetical addition" and went on to argue that many dissertations, at least in the humanities and social sciences, were of the arithmetical kind.

I cannot go into the details of this debate except to say these few things. The traditional conception of the dissertation as an "original and significant contribution to knowledge" is currently being challenged by the conception that the dissertation is a training instrument. As it is, the dissertation is now quite different on the opposite sides of the campus: in the sciences it is new but not the candidate's own; in the social sciences and humanities it is his own but not new.

Finally, let me mention the matter of length of dissertations. All three groups involved—graduate deans, graduate faculty, and recent recipients of the doctorate—agree that doctoral dissertations (outside the sciences) are too long. They now range, in median length, from 71 pages in mathematics, 84 in bacteriology, 96 in physics, 102 in biology, and 106 in chemistry and psychology, all the way up to 312 in English, 352 in history, and 359 in political science. Taken as a whole, the sciences have a median of 105 to 110 pages, the social sciences about 225, and the humanities about 285. A substantial body of academic opinion favors a much shorter dissertation—that is one of 100 pages or less—and I am strongly recommending shorter dissertations on the non-scientific side of the campus.

*Proposition 7: The Master's degree should be revived as a major degree for college teachers.*

In 1934, a committee of the American Council on Education noted the confusion between the academic and the professional uses of the Master's degree and in effect threw up its hands—calling for a study, by someone else! In the same year a report of the United States Office of Education suggested that the place of the degree “doubtless never will be answered finally.” Never is a long time, but certainly the past quarter century only bears out this judgment of the situation.

One of the troubles with the Master's stems from an alleged glory of American higher education, namely, its diversity. The very diversity of the Master's degree troubles those people who want a degree to mean only one thing, or at most a very few. The Master's is now given in a large number of forms in addition to the traditional M.A. and M.S. and for a wide range of work in a wide range of fields. In many academic disciplines the Master's is given to a candidate on the road to the doctorate almost automatically and certainly with little detour or cost of time. In many professional fields the Master's is, or is on the way to becoming, the first professional degree. In many academic fields it is the terminal degree mainly in cases of discouragement and consolation; in most professional fields it is terminal by design. In academic fields it is an insurance policy for those going on to the doctorate, a consolation prize for those discouraged from doing so, and a qualifying certificate for teachers in secondary schools and junior colleges. In professional schools and departments it has mainly a certifying function. It remained for the graduate dean at Harvard to characterize the situation in a striking figure: “The Master's degree,” he wrote last year in the *Journal of Higher Education*, “is, at present, a bit like a streetwalker—all things to all men (and at different prices).”

In addition, under the demands of diversity and the stress of numbers, the Master's degree has been weakened, at least in

prestige. It is generally assumed in academic circles that the Master's "does not mean as much as it used to." It has become associated with professional practice rather than with academic scholarship: less than 30 per cent of the Master's degrees a year ago were in the arts and sciences, down about 10 percentage points in the last decade. Furthermore, the degree has weakened most in the better institutions. It now tends to be stronger in universities that do not concentrate at the doctoral level. The higher degree tends to crowd out the lower one: if nothing else, there are simply too many theses to supervise and the doctoral load takes precedence. As a result, the top universities have pretty well lost control of the standards for the degree, and if the prestige institutions neglect it, the others can maintain it only with difficulty, if at all.

As a result, I conclude that the prospects of making the Master's into a highly respected, research-oriented academic degree for college teachers on a national scale are quite dim. There is too much going against it: the historical decline, the lowered prestige, the diversity of meaning, the numbers of claimants relative to the number of faculty available for sponsorship and guidance, the competitive disadvantage relative to the doctorate, the coolness of the better colleges, the reluctance of the better students, the poorer career prospects, the low return on investment. The plain historical fact is, I think, that degrees are not strengthened as a matter of requirements and standards. In this respect, if they move at all, they move downhill rather than up.

At the same time, I hasten to add, the degree is by no means on its way out. If it were going to die in our generation or the next, it would have died already. But it is flourishing: an average in the 1950's of well over sixty thousand granted each year. The reason is simply that it is needed for many of the functions noted above—for certifying, for occasional testing,

for consoling (and thus protecting the faculty and the doctorate against the inevitable mistakes in the selection of candidates), for insuring the student against eventualities. For the Master's carries its weight in the academic procession, but it cannot carry a great deal more. It is a necessary degree today, but it cannot be made into a prestigious one today or tomorrow.

*Proposition 8: The graduate school today is doing a rather poor job.*

This is the burden of most of the recent commentary on the graduate school in the professional literature, but it is not a judgment that I share.

However, what I think is not nearly so important as what the participants in the system think. The fact is that almost everyone, except those directly in charge, is satisfied or better. Students who recently emerged from the program are more than satisfied, and so are the employers in industry and—let it be especially noted—in the colleges. Those who take the training and those who take the product are at ease, but not so those who give the training—certainly a better state of affairs than the other way around. For example, when I asked the recent recipients of the doctorate how good their program was “in training you for the position you now hold,” just over half said it was “very good,” another 40 per cent “fairly good,” 7 per cent “just adequate,” and only 3 per cent “unsatisfactory” or “quite poor.” No one quite knows what par is for the educational venture, but, so far as the satisfaction of the product goes, this must be well over it. In general, those least satisfied with the training are also least satisfied with their present jobs—probably the poorer students.

Only the graduate faculty and the graduate deans are inclined to be very critical: partly because they are protecting standards, partly because they tend to be self-critical perfec-



tionists, and partly, I think, because they feel it is expected of them.

Such evaluation through comparison can be carried a few steps further. First, there is a comparison with an earlier time. I asked the various groups at interest to compare the quality of the programs today with those before World War II, and they strongly believe that we are better off now. As a matter of fact, the graduate faculty believe that students today are better than those before the war—even though the latter were largely themselves! When I asked the recent recipients to “compare how the high school did its job with how the college did its job and how the graduate school did its job,” they voted strongly for the graduate school. When I asked the graduate faculty to compare the American version of doctoral study with its equivalent abroad, they voted strongly for the American version, and there is independent evidence that this is not simply a self-interested judgment.

Finally, I asked the graduate faculty and the recent recipients to judge the present state of their own disciplines—“its intellectual vigor, development, progress, etc.”—and here two points of interest emerge. The first is that there is a wide range in judgments as to how well the disciplines are doing—from physics and mathematics at the top with about 60 per cent “very satisfactory” down to English and political science at the bottom with less than 10 per cent. The second is that the people who do not like the present state of graduate training are the same ones who are not satisfied with the present state of their discipline. It is well to remember this association, I think, when appraising the criticisms of graduate study: they typically contain an element of unhappiness about one’s own field. The critics seek to change their disciplines, not just the training given in it—or, rather, to change their disciplines by changing the training. Nor is this an unrealistic or illegitimate

expectation: in a real sense, the graduate school "owns" the discipline. But the fact remains that, just as the critics among the recent recipients don't like their jobs, so the critics among the faculty tend not to like the present character of their fields.

Let us always remember that graduate training in this country did not begin until 1876, with the founding of Johns Hopkins, and that it did not really get under way until, say, 1900, when the Association of American Universities was founded—a short sixty years ago. In that time, what has the graduate school accomplished?

It has grown from a few fields training a few students in a few institutions to a large and impressive system of advanced training. It has trained a large body of professional teachers for American higher education, and trained them in subject matter. It has increasingly trained staffs for the secondary and elementary school systems, especially at the level of leadership. It is increasingly training personnel for administrative as well as research posts in industry and government. In addition to providing personnel for enriched undergraduate work on its own campus, it has led a number of educational experiments at the collegiate level and it produces a number of the leading texts used throughout the system of higher education. It is now taking the lead in the reconstruction of parts of the curriculum at the high-school level and in the further training of high-school teachers. In all these ways, it has served as the fountainhead in which a large part of the educational system renews and refreshes itself.

In both educational and non-educational spheres, the graduate-school stamp is accepted as a qualifying mark of competence, often *the* qualifying mark, so that the graduate school has become the chief screen of scientific and scholarly talent in the society. Its leading personnel have increasingly served

as advisors and consultants on the largest issues of our national life—foreign relations, economic affairs, scientific policy, civil rights and liberties, health and welfare. In one of its spheres it has become a key to the national security; and in several others it has made direct contributions to the good life through the application of learning. In a relatively brief period of years it has developed an American brand of advanced training that surpassed the models abroad and not only held American students but attracted more and more foreign ones. And, overlaying and underpinning it all, it has brought American research and scholarship to a position of world leadership, and it has systematically furthered man's knowledge of himself and his world.

To anyone who sees life steadily and sees it whole, this is quite an accomplishment for a relatively few decades.

Whether it wants it or not, the graduate school now has a responsibility of leadership in American education and even American life. As the system of higher education becomes more massive in the next years, and as the society itself becomes more complex, the need for trained intelligence will grow, and so will the importance of the graduate school. It holds a critical position in the life of the mind in this country as the primary home of the American scholar.

## MIDWAY Authors

BERNARD R. BERELSON, who writes about graduate education in this issue, holds a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He is director of the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University and was formerly dean of the Graduate Library School at the University of Chicago and director of the behavioral sciences division of the Ford Foundation. He is the author of several books. His report on graduate education is reprinted from the *Library Quarterly*, January, 1961. A broader version of the author's views appear in his book, *Graduate Education in the United States* (McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1960), completed after a two-year study financed by the Carnegie Corporation.

DANIEL J. BOORSTIN is professor of American history at the University of Chicago and a prize-winning author. His latest book, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (Random House, 1958), won several awards, among them the Bancroft Award given by Columbia University. He is also editor of the "Chicago History of American Civilization," a series being published by the University of Chicago Press. A graduate of Harvard, a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, and a barrister-at-law at the Inner Temple, London, he received his Doctor's degree from Yale. He has served as Fulbright Professor of American History at the University of Rome, Italy, and has lectured throughout the Far East under auspices of the State Department. His article on the uniqueness of American politics is a condensation from his book, *The Genius of American Politics* (University of Chicago Press, 1953).

HORST W. JANSON is professor of fine arts and chairman of the Department of Fine Arts at New York University's Washington Square College of Arts and Sciences. In 1948 and 1955 Janson received Guggenheim fellowships to enable him to work on a pictorial corpus and critical catalogue of *The Sculpture of Donatello*, which was later published by the Princeton University Press. He is also the author of *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, *The Story of Painting for Young People*, and *The Picture History of Painting* and is co-author with his wife, Dora Jane, of *Key Monuments of the History of Art*. His article, "After Betsy, What?" is reprinted from *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, February, 1959.

PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON (in private life Lady C. P. Snow) is a gifted novelist in her own right, having published four novels in England. She is also a distinguished critic of English fiction and has an established reputation as a scholar of Proust. The radio play which appears here is one six that she wrote for the British Broadcasting Corporation. They were published in book form, *Proust Recaptured*, by the University of Chicago Press in 1958.

VALENTIN LAVRENTIEVITCH YANINE received his diploma in archeology in 1951 from the University of Moscow and has taught there since 1954. His studies have been concerned for the most part with sigillography, metology, numismatics, and the history of applied art of ancient Russia. In 1947 he took part in the excavation of Novgorod that he describes in this issue. His article is abridged from *Diogenes*, Spring, 1960. The photographs illustrating the article were sent us by the author. The article was translated by Wells F. Chamberlin.

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